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An Advertisement to the Reader.

TH E several Authors of the ensuing Discourses, whose Places of Residence are at a considerable Distance from New-York, depended upon a Gentleman of the City to inspect the Press; but being disappointed by his Removal from thence, and one of them having an Opportunity of looking through the following Sheets, as far as to the Close of the 52d Page, desires that the following Corrections of Errata might take Place: And that the ingenious Reader would make favourable Allowances for what has escaped his hasty Remarks, and ingeniously correct the Errors he shall observe in the Pages following thereupon, not yet seen from the Press; signifying, at the same Time, that as the marginal Notes upon the Discourse of Ordination, are added for Illustration Sake, where the Argument was but briefly touched upon; so if any Thing in that Discourse, the Charge, or Exhortation to the People, shall occur to the Reader, which he apprehends to be singular, he may be informed, that there was something peculiar in the Circumstances of the Ordination.

M E R R A T A

TIT L E Page, Line 16, read *determined*. Page 3, Line 20, read *running*. l. 28, r. exalt. p. 4, l. 15, r. Hands. l. 33, r. Context. p. 7, l. 32, r. stupendous. p. 9, l. 3, r. of super-angelick Glory. l. 33, r. immortal. l. 5, from Bottom, r. uttermost. p. 10, l. 32, r. terrible. p. 11, l. 2, r. condemnatory. p. 12, l. 6, r. admirable. p. 15, l. 34, r. Salvation. p. 20, l. 1, r. fallen short. l. 26 and 27, r. supersede. p. 21, l. 20, r. restoral. l. 24, r. stupendous. l. 26, r. reluctant. l. 31, r. of the Love, &c. l. last, r. adoring. p. 24, l. 15, r. multifarious. l. 27, r. Auditories. p. 26, l. 28, r. despiseth, four Times. l. 2, from Bottom, r. Bellows are burnt. p. 27, l. 23, r. indispenfable. p. 28, l. 6, r. Destruction. p. 29, l. 11, r. Tallmadge. p. 33, l. 3, r. devoted. l. 17, r. Sin-Offerings. p. 35, l. 24, r. endeavour. l. 3 from Bottom, r. limited. p. 37, l. 22 of the Margin, r. Precedent. p. 38, l. 2 of the Margin, r. limited. p. 39, l. 23 of the Margin, r. Extravagancies. p. 44, l. 15 of the Margin, r. inherent. p. 45, l. 8, r. Christianity. p. 46, l. 6 from Bottom, r. barred. p. 48, l. 9 from Bottom, r. considered. p. 50, l. 29, r. Commandments. p. 51, l. 4 from Bottom, r. left that which is lame, &c. p. 52, l. ult. r. out of a pure Heart. p. 57, l. 15, r. Brethren.



CHRIST *the grand Subject of Gospel-Preaching; the Power of GOD, manifested in the Work of Faith; and Unbelief under the Gospel, lamented.*

A
S E R M O N,

Preach'd at *Brook-Haven, on Long-Island,* October, 23, 1754.

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

Mr. *BENJAMIN TALLMADGE.*

By ^K~~SAMUEL~~ **BUELL, A. M.**
Pastor of the Church at East-Hampton, Long-Island.

Together with a Discourse on **ORDINATION; The CHARGE, and EXHORTATION** to the People.

Published at the Desire of the Hearers.

1 Corinthians ii. 2. *For I determine not to know any Thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*

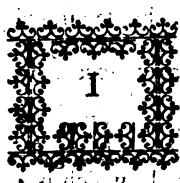
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ORDINATION SERMON.

ISAIAH LIII. 1.

Who hath believed our Report? And to whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed?



It is a joyful and glorious Truth, sufficiently obvious, from the Representation which the Holy Scriptures give of the deep Counsels of the Wisdom and Grace of God, with Reference to the admirable Plot, and Economy of our Salvation, that infinite Wisdom hath devised the Method of Man's Redemption, in a Way wherein all the divine Attributes accord and display themselves in their brightest Lustre; even in such Degrees of Exaltation and Manifestation as were before concealed; and this in Conjunction with the high and endless Happiness of Man. Which Glory and Felicity, is brought about by Virtue of a Covenant; the Plan of which was drawn in the Council of the Trinity, and enter'd into from all Eternity: For, altho' the Promulgation of the Covenant of Redemption was not, till after God enter'd into a Covenant of Works with Adam, as the Head and Representative of all Mankind, and by him as such violated; yet it was really prior thereto, as a Spring run under Ground from all Eternity, until it first broke out in that ample, that surprizing Promise of a Saviour made in Paradise, after the Fall, namely, that the Seed of the Woman should bruise the Head of the Serpent. § The Gospel is the Revelation of this Covenant, which before lay hid in the Depths of the eternal Counsel, or a Declaration of a Way of Salvation for Sinners by Jesus Christ; which God, in infinite Wisdom, Love and Grace, hath prepared. Now, Evangelical Faith, is that Grace or Duty, whereby we give unto God, that Glory which he designed to manifest and exalt in and by Jesus Christ. Upon the Flight of a penitent Sinner unto the Mercy of God in Jesus Christ; or in and by the Heart's Approbation of, Consent unto, and Acquiescence in the Way of Life and Salvation of Sinners by Jesus Christ, Glory is given to God, and our eternal Happiness effectually secured: And 'tis the Device of immense Wisdom, agreeable to boundless Goodness, and adorable Sovereignty, that such a Faith should come by Hearing. ¶ 'Tis by the Gospel Report, that saving Faith is begotten in the Heart of a lost Sinner. The Proposal of the Gospel, according to the Mind and

Eph. iii. 9. † 2 Cor. iv. 6. § Gen. iii. 15. | Rom. x. 17.

Will of God, is hereunto supposed. Not only the Gospel itself, but also the Preaching of it, is ordinarily required unto believing. *How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a Preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?* The Word *Preach*, signifies the Office of a Herald, or Ambassador; and comprehends no less than this, to be employed by *Christ*, to make Report of him; to tell Mankind what he is; to make him known; to give a Publication to People of the glorious Design he came into the World upon; which was, that Men might believe in him and be saved. We have the highest Assurance, that *Jesus Christ*, our great Law-giver, has appointed a standing Gospel Ministry in his Church, to continue to the Consummation of all Things. The various Furniture, and requisite Qualifications for the Office and Work of the Evangelical Ministry, he hath stated in his Gospel, wherein he requires that Persons endowed herewith, in order to officiate therein, be separated thereto, by the Imposition of the Hand of the Presbytery, and solemn Prayer. And upon Investiture, that is received in *Ordination*, performed according to Scripture Precept and Precedent, they may regularly exercise that *Power*, which is given by Christ's Commission, and comes alone from *Him, the Head of the Church*; and equally belongs to all Gospel Ministers. Being separated to the Service of God, in the Ministry of the Gospel, which is a Station high and sacred, honourable, and truly venerable, we are to exert ourselves with the greatest Fidelity, in making known the glad Tidings of Salvation; whereby our *Sound going out into all the Earth*,* the perishing Sons of Men may be brought to saving Faith, in the Almighty Redeemer, to the Glory of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

In this View of Things, when our Negotiations are in great Measure, unsuccessful, it seems both natural and generous, to adopt, as our own, the deplorable Out-cry of the Prophet *Isaiah, Who hath believed our Report? and to whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed?* In these Words, the evangelical Prophet *Isaiah* expresses his Regret and Lamentation, that so few truly believed and cordially embraced the Report, which he and others made concerning *Jesus Christ*. I say, a Report concerning *Jesus Christ*: For, 'tis evident, that of him the Contest speaketh, in that divers Passages thereof are quoted, with Application to *Christ* in the New-Testament. The Words may be read, *who hath believed our Doctrine*, that is, concerning the *Messias*; or, *who hath believed our Hearing*, that which we have heard from the Lord; and have to propose to be heard by others. And this is a Report concerning the Lord *Jesus Christ*, and as such, not peculiar to the Prophet *Isaiah*; for all the Prophets reported of him, and the Apostles carried this Report the World over, and faithful Ministers of the Gospel, have, in all Ages, made this Report *his our Report*. The Prophet lamented the Infidelity, not only of the Time in which he lived, but also of After-Times. He foresaw how it was like to be in distant Ages. Our Saviour applied this prophetick Scripture to the unbelieving *Jews* in his Time; and it is applied likewise to the little Success which the Apostle's Preaching met with among *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and there is still sad Occasion to have it applied:

For

* Rom. x. 18.

For, alas! all have not *obey'd the Gospel*, nor given it that cordial Reception, which its happy Contents well demand. Many that profess to believe our Report, do not discern nor acknowledge a divine Power with the Word; for, *to whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed? By the Arm of the Lord*, some understand the Doctrine of the Gospel, which is expressly call'd *the Power of God*: Some suppose, hereby is intended the *Messiah*, who is also call'd the Arm or Power of God. The Words are to be understood *figuratively*; hereby is intended the Power of God made manifest, in and by the Production of saving Faith.---This last Clause of the Verse hath Connection with the former, and serves for Confirmation of the Assertion implied in the Interrogation, *who hath believed our Report?* And also, to point out the Necessity of a Divine Power, to co-operate with the Word, in order to make it effectual to Faith in them that hear. 'Tis evident, that but few truly believe, in that the Power of God is revealed to but few. While the Prophet thus sheweth the Necessity of a divine Power, to make the Word effectual, he doth not intend to excuse the Infidelity of Sinners, who turn a deaf Ear to the Report, which the Gospel makes of Christ, who rebel against the Light, who forfeit the Grace of God, and are Unbelievers of Choice and not of Force. These Things are to be greatly lamented, to be much wonder'd at. Are not the Tidings we bring very glorious? Are they not *worthy of all Acceptation?* But, alas! being rejected, we are sent back to our great Master with Lamentation.

Indiscouraging farther upon these Words, 'tis hop'd, it may not be improper, nor unsuitable to the present Occasion, to endeavour, by the divine Assistance,

First, To shew, that *Jesus Christ* is the Sum of all that we are to report and preach, as Ministers of the Gospel.

Secondly, That there is a Manifestation of the Power of God, when our Report concerning *Jesus Christ*, is effectual to saving Faith in them that hear.

Thirdly, That it affords a just Foundation for our Regret and Lamentation, that so few truly believe our Report of *Jesus Christ*. After which I shall,

Fourthly, Conclude with an Application, by Way of Address.

First, then, I am to shew, that *Jesus Christ* is the Sum of all we are to report and preach, as Ministers of the Gospel.

When we consider the divine Original, gracious and holy Ends, high Importance, and sacred Excellence of the Office and Work of the Gospel Ministry; Fidelity therein appears of infinite Concernment: And in that, Preaching is one great and noble Part of the Office, it requires a correspondent Regard. Amidst all the Labours and Glories of our eminent Station in the Church of Christ, it certainly concerns us, greatly concerns us, to have the Subject Matter of our Preaching, such as our Lord hath enjoin'd upon us. Unless the reigning Theme of our Sermons tallieth with our sacred Instructions, and correspondeth with the Directions of our Commission, we cannot faithfully discharge our sacred Trust. What the grand Subject of our Preaching may be, admits of little Query, of no Dispute; *Jesus Christ*

Christ is the Sum and Subſtance of all we have to preach, as Miniſters of the Goſpel.

We report, purſuant hereto, that the infinite Excellencies of God do belong to *Jeſus Chriſt*; that he is by Nature, GOD, eſſential and eternal God: That he is of infinite Excellence and Dignity, of abſolute Knowledge, Wiſdom, Juſtice, Purity, Power, Truth and Goodneſs. We have a divine Warrant, thus to make Report of him; for, thus he made Report of himſelf, that he was God, *equal with the Father*. The ſacred Scriptures aſcribe to him, thoſe divine Names and Attributes, which are proper to God alone; they aſcribe to him divine Works and religious Worſhip, in ſuch a Senſe, as that hereby the Godhead is intended, and ſo as to argue him a divine Perſon. *In him dwelleth all the Fulneſs of the God-head bodily*. All the Perfections of the divine Nature belong to *Jeſus Chriſt*. Thus we preach; and thus ought People to believe. Unleſs they believe the Divinity of *Jeſus Chriſt*, how can they be real Chriſtians? How can they be ſaved? The Divinity of Chriſt, is a fundamental Article of the Chriſtian Religion. The Deity of our Saviour, is a Doctrinè his Miniſters are particularly charged to give a Publication of. Accordingly, *we liſt up our Voices*, and are not afraid to ſay to our Congregations, **BEHOLD YOUR GOD**. 'Tis a Doctrinè, which reflecteth a peculiar Beauty and Glory upon the Embaſſy we bring to our People; --- *How beautiful upon the Mountains are our Feet*, while we publiſh the good Tidings of Salvation, and ſay unto Zion, *thy God reigneth! Jehovah is King over all the Earth*, even *Jeſus Chriſt, who is over all, GOD, bleſſed for ever*.

Further, We declare *Jeſus Chriſt* to be Mediator; the only Mediator, between God and Man; and that he partakes of the Nature of both Parties, between whom he is Mediator. We repreſent our Lord Chriſt, as the great *Theanthropos*, or God-Man Mediator, in whom the divine and human Natures are ſo marvellouſly and intimately united, as to conſtitute *one* complex Perſon. We make Declaration, that to this great, high and glorious Office, the Son of God, the Effulgence of his Glory, the expreſs Image of his Subſtance, was deſign'd and fore-ordain'd from Eternity; and that he actually undertook the Execution of it immediately after the Fall of Man. In all preceding Ages, to his Incarnation, he continually acted as our Mediator; and when *the Fulneſs of Time came*, the eternal Word, the ſame which in the Beginning was with God, and was God, now ſtoop'd to aſſume the Nature of Man, into moſt intimate and ineffable Union with his divine Perſon. Miſterious and marvellous Event! Two Natures, infinitely diſtant in themſelves, are moſt nearly united in the Perſon of Chriſt! *Without Controverſy, great is the Myſtery of Godlineſs, God manifeſt in the Fleſh*. The Lord of Glory took our Nature upon him, with a View to accompliſh the Ends of his mediatorial Undertaking. *Jeſus Chriſt* had thoſe Things to do, as Mediator, which none but *one that is God* could do; and he had thoſe Things to ſuffer, as Mediator, which none but a Man could undergo: It was therefore neceſſary, that he ſhould be both God and Man, in order to his being a ſuitable Mediator between them. It was requiſite that the Mediator ſhould be God; for how could human Nature, alone keep from ſinking under the

infinite Wrath of God, and the Power of Death? Surely our Mediator is a divine Person, and must needs be so, to give Worth and Efficacy to his Sufferings, Obedience, and Intercession. The Sufferings of a finite Creature, as such, cannot pay an infinite Price, and thereby answer the Demands of Justice: Had not *Jesus Christ* been very and perfect God, his Obedience had not been legally meritorious. Where had been the Merit of his Obedience, and the Value of his Sufferings? If he was not a divine Person, how could he subdue our Enemies, apply Redemption, and bring us to consummate and eternal Salvation? It was necessary he should be Man, in order to obey the Precept of the Law, and to undergo the Curse of the Law: this he could not do unless he had been Man. The Essentials of the Law were taken into the Covenant of Redemption; and *Jesus Christ*, by voluntary Consent to the Terms of the Covenant obliged himself to obey the Precepts of the Law, and to be subject to the Curse thereof. Accordingly, as Surety of the Covenant,---he obeyed what the Law enjoined, and suffer'd what it threatened, as a Punishment due to us for Sin. He perfectly obeyed the Will of God; he fulfilled the moral Law; he observed the ceremonial Law; he fulfilled *all Righteousness*. He suffered the utmost Punishment, which Justice required, and God propos'd, for the Expiation of Sin: He became obedient even unto Death. His Sufferings were endur'd by him in a Way of Obedience: And his Obedience was not only super-equivalent to all that Man was to do by the Law, but equal to all the Reward promised in the Covenant of Redemption. In a Word, *Jesus Christ*, as a Person infinite in Excellence and Dignity, fulfilled the Conditions of the Covenant;---made a Purchase of compleat Redemption, and eternal Happiness for his People. He underwent and performed all that, which was required of him in the Covenant of Redemption, wherein it was adjust'd and agreed, what should be satisfactory and meritorious, and so effectual to save Sinners; and hereby merited, not only forfeited, but even, greater than forfeited, Blessings for his People. The Law is *magnified* and made *honourable*; the divine Perfections all harmonize, and shine out with admirable Glory, with a Meridian Splendor, throughout all the Progress of the stupendious Work of Man's Redemption.

We report of *Jesus Christ*, that, as Mediator, he is invest'd with a prophetic, priestly, and kingly Office; Which Offices do wonderfully answer the spiritual Necessities of Sinners; and admirably qualify him for the compleating the Work of Salvation. We declare that he is an all-wise, powerful, incomparable Prophet; and that he hath executed his Prophetic Office in all Ages of the Church: That he hath revealed the Will of God outwardly by his Word, even all that is necessary to be known, in order to our Salvation. And we report, that in the Execution of his prophetic Office, he enlightens the Minds of Sinners, so as to be effectual to their Conviction and Conversion; that he irradiates their dark Minds, *alienated from the Life of God*, through the Ignorance that is in them, and gives them to see a Beauty and Glory in the Gospel. We report, that he illuminateth the Souls of Believers, so as to promote their Sanctification and Consolation. By the Light he communicates to them, they are enabled to behold, in a supernatural Way and Manner, the moral Beauty and infinite Excellence of divine

Truths ; and to obtain an experimental Taste of their incomparable and rapturous Sweetness. We report, that *Jesus* is the great and immortal High-Priest of our Salvation ; that he is a Priest settled in his Office, by the sacred Oath of God ; that in his Person he was a Priest, and the Sacrifice that he offered was himself. We speak of his Obedience and Sufferings, as being in our Room and Stead, that the Debt of his People was exacted of him, and he paid it to the utmost Farthing : The Father spared him not ; he was wounded for our Transgressions ; he was bruised for our Iniquities. We proclaim, that God would neither pardon Sin, nor accept of the Sinner, without a Satisfaction ; without shedding of Blood there was no Remission of Sin. We declare, that *Jesus Christ* offered a Sacrifice to the Father, infinitely satisfactory and meritorious. We represent him, as having enter'd into Heaven, now to appear in the Presence of God for us, where he ever liveth, to make Intercession for his People : A Priest upon a Throne ! the Lamb that had been slain ! We report concerning *Jesus Christ*, that he is a King and Lawgiver. We represent him sitting on a Throne, as well as dying on the Cross : We preach not ourselves, but *Christ Jesus the Lord*. We assert his Authority over the whole Creation, and especially over the Churches. He is indeed, by Nature, King, as he is by Nature, God ; and as he is Mediator too. He is King and Lord of the Universe : All Power is given to him in Heaven and Earth. He long governed the Jews, by a Theocratical Kind of Government ; and is King of the Church of God in all Ages ; and reigns over all Nations, and all Creatures for his Church : All Angels, Men and Devils are under his supreme and universal Dominion. We declare, that *Jesus Christ* hath a spiritual Kingdom, in the Souls and Consciences of his People. We report of him, as a King of incomparable royal Endowments, of Power, Riches, Knowledge, Wisdom, Justice, Meekness, Clemency and Mercy. We assert, that he is able to execute the whole Design of Man's Redemption ; and that he will bring all his Redeemed to eternal Glory, and put them in Possession of the everlasting Happiness of Heaven. He must reign 'till he hath put all Enemies under his Feet ; * and in a Sort after that ; for he is an immortal and eternal King, *He is King for ever*. For, tho' his Kingdom shall cease, as to the present Manner of Administration ; yet as to all the Essentials of it, it is an everlasting Kingdom, and of his Dominion there shall be no End.

We report of our Lord Christ, that he was elected, called, and commissioned to, furnish'd and accomplish'd for, his Office ; assisted, accepted, and rewarded therein by the Father ; and that he undertook and carried on his mediatorial Work voluntarily. And we assert the Exercise of his prophetic, priestly, and kingly Office, both in his State of *Humiliation and Exaltation*. And these Things, which are now only glanc'd at, we expatiate and enlarge upon, when we contemplate and discourse upon his Incarnation, Humiliation, and consequent Exaltation. These are Themes we much insist upon, in the Course of our Ministry. We proclaim the immense Condescension of *Jesus Christ*, in taking the human Nature into Union with his divine Person. That the human Nature should be united to the second

Person in the Godhead, was truly a new Thing under the Sun, and without a Precedent in universal Nature. We report, that he empty'd himself of the super-angelick Glory, and vail'd it under the Cloud of Humanity; that he consented to be made under, and to fulfill the Law, in it's whole Demand, both penal and moral. Numerous were the Miseries, Sorrows, and Sufferings of our Redeemer, in his State of Humiliation; heavy the Punishment our Lord underwent, when he bore our Iniquities. Hence those Fears, and Tears, and Prayers, and Cries: Hence his Agony. We report of the astonishing Scenes of Humiliation he pass'd thro' from his Birth to his Burial; yea, even to his shaking off the Garments of Mortality. Unparalleled Humiliation, proclaiming super-eminent, matchless, and immense Love! How weighty were the Causes of this amazing Event! how glorious the Ends intended and answer'd! how numerous the blessed Effects resulting from it? We report of the glorious Jesus, as reviving from Death, arising amidst Miracles and Wonders in Nature, and the Ministrations of holy Angels, conquering the King of Terrors, triumphing over Satan and all the Enemies of his Cross, and exhibiting full Evidence of the Validity of his Sacrifice, and ample Assurance of the glorious Resurrection of Believers at the last Day.

That after a short, pleasurable and instructive Interview with his Disciples, he commanded and confer'd a solemn Blessing upon them; and immediately ascended in a Chariot of Glory, attended with adoring Angels, and enter'd into the Holy Place not made with Hands, to appear in the Presence of God, for his People. He went to Heaven to prepare it, and to take Possession of it for his People; to intercede continually with God for them, to pour down the Holy Spirit in plentiful Measures upon them, and to govern all Things for their Good. By the figurative Expression of his Session at the Right Hand of God, we represent him, as in a State of high Honour and Glory, Power and Authority, Rest and Joy; and as in the Possession of the glorious Purchases of his Cross, and mindful of his People, in the Height of all his Glory; dispensing spiritual Blessings with a liberal Hand, ordering all Things well for them, and designing to advance them to a Throne of immortal Purity and Glory.

We report of *Jesus Christ*, in his unsearchable Riches of Righteousness, Grace and Glory, and of his infinite Ability to save, that he is sufficient to answer all the Danger our Souls are in, and the Necessities they are under: We bring good News to a desolate World, which lies in Wickedness; for we tell Sinners of Mankind, that in *Jesus Christ*, they may find Merit for their Guile, Fulness for their Wants, infinite Mercy and Goodness for their Miseries: That he wants for no Grace to make them a willing People, nor for Righteousness to make them a pardon'd People: In a Word, that the Mighty *Jesus* wants nothing to make him a sufficient Mediator; for he is able to save unto the uttermost, all that come unto God by him. And we not only assure all Men, that *Jesus Christ* is an All-sufficient Saviour, and that there is Merit and Grace enough in him for the WHOLE WORLD; but we also tell them, that we are commanded to preach the Gospel to every Creature, and that they are commanded to believe in *Jesus Christ*, and that he who believes

believes shall be saved, and that he will not reject those that come unto him; that he is willing to seek and save that which was lost. We tell Sinners, that Jesus Christ invites them to come to him, and to bring nothing to him but Guilt, Poverty and Miseries, and the broken and contrite Heart; to come, and buy all the necessary Benefits of his Purchase, without Money and without Price. * If they want and seek a Proof of his good Will toward Man, (amidst innumerable other Evidences hereof,) we tell them, he was pleased to die in our Nature, and to die with it.

We proclaim that Jesus Christ is the Fountain of Blessedness, the Portion and chief Good of Man; that the everlasting Happiness of his People doth eminently consist in the Enjoyment of him; that he is not only the Author of their Blessedness, but also the Matter of it: That the Happiness of Heaven results from a transforming Vision, of the Glory of our Lord Jesus. In him there is the Concurrence of all divine Perfections, and Grace in the highest Strain of Eminency: Blessed are they who will behold his Face in Righteousness! For they shall be satisfied with his Likeness; when they shall see him as he is.

I might proceed thus, but, I would now observe, that in declaring the whole Counsel of God, and giving every Truth its due Weight, we endeavour to have a constant Reference to Jesus Christ.

Knowing the Terror of the Lords, we persuade Men to become reconciled to God by Jesus Christ. We open and explain to christless Sinners, the Covenant of Works. We set before them the Spirituality of the Law in it's Threatening. We tell them of that Law which the People of Israel could not hear still the third Day, and which was given with such Thunder and Lightning from the thick Clouds, and with such a terrible Voice of the Trumpet, that it caused the Camp of Israel to tremble, the Earth to quake, and even Moses, the Man of God, exceedingly to fear. We observe to them, that the wise Legislator hath annexed a Threatening to his Law; and that by Virtue thereof, as Transgressors, they are condemn'd to condign Punishment; if doom'd down to the dismal Vault of Hell. As the Harbingers of Gods wrath sound out his terrible Curses against them, from Sinal's Mount. Now we thus address them in the Language of Terror, that we may bring them to receive the gentler Whispers of the Gospel; or sin other Ways; that we may (by the Blessing of God,) direct them to Christ by Faith, for Righteousness, Grace, and eternal Life. We shew, that the Law was given with evangelical and merciful Purposes. We present to their View, the Purity and Perfection of the divine Law; that thereby they may receive powerful Conviction of their Guilt, Inability and Misery; that they may know, that without shedding of Blood there is no Remission of Sin; and that by Means hereof, they may be put up unto Faith in Jesus Christ.

We proclaim before the Face of the World, that the Scripture Doctrine of Salvation, by free and sovereign Grace, is a Doctrine according to Godliness. We remind Believers of their respective Duties, as well as great and precious Privileges. We tell them, that through Faith we do not make void, but shall be able to bring forth a Variety of Respects to

God. * *Ist. iv. 1. Gal. iii. 23. Rom. iii. 23.*

them; especially, as a Rule of Life and holy Obedience: That altho' they are freed from the commendatory Power and Curse of it, being freely pardon'd and justified by the Righteousness of *Jesus Christ*; yet 'tis requir'd of them to attend to the Law as the Rule, by which they should regulate their Hearts and Lives. We urge upon them chearful, universal, and constant Obedience to the moral Law, and all the Precepts of the Gospel. But then, we inforce our Exhortations, by Motives taken from the Authority and Love of God and Christ. We tell them their Obedience must be the Issue of Faith, in Christ, and the Product of Love to God; and that in all their Obedience, they must have an Eye to Christ's Authority, commanding; to his Spirit of Grace, assisting; and to the Merit of his Blood for commending.

We often insist on those Subjects, which are inward and spiritual, and which go by the Name of *Experimental Religion*; but then we consider them with a special Relation to Christ, and in the interesting Light of Conformity to his Gospel.

We represent Faith and Love, and all evangelical Graces, as deriv'd from Christ; and as disposing the happy Subjects of 'em to all the visible Fruits of Holiness. We tell our Hearers, 'tis Presumption and damning Delusion, to pretend to a saving Interest in Christ, without a correspondent Conformity to the Precepts of his Gospel. We often inculcate moral and social Duties; and we refuse not the Use of Arguments, drawn from the Nature and Reason of Things, to inforce our Exhortations. We represent Virtue in its lovely Charms, and blessed Consequences; and Vice in its horrid Hue and destructive Tendencies: We urge to the Practice of the former, and dehort from the Pursuit of the latter, by all possible Motives; but then, we ever remember to do these Things in an evangelical Manner. To preach moral Duties, with a proper Reference to the Authority, Love and Grace of Christ, is to preach Christ; but, to have no Regard to Christ herein, is to make void the great Design of the Gospel. 'Tis to forget that we are Ministers of the Gospel, and that the Mediation of Christ, and the powerful Influences of the holy Spirit, are the peculiar Glories of the Christian Religion.

We inculcate *sublime* and amiable Apprehensions of God: We observe to our Hearers, that we are incapable of direct intuitive Apprehensions of the Divine Essence, or its Properties. We are at once lost, when we attempt to exercise ourselves, on that which is absolutely Imense, Eternal, Infinite. We form some Conceptions of God, from his Displays of himself in the Creation and Government of the World: His own immediate Works have strong Characters of his Divine Excellencies upon them: But these are very obscure, without the Help of divine Revelation, by which all our Conceptions of him must be regulated: The holy Scriptures reveal the *Being of God*, and his Subsistence in the Trinity of Persons: And we observe to our Hearers, that in the Person and Mediation of Christ there is made unto us a blessed Representation of the glorious Properties of the Divine Nature; so that we have Knowledge of the Glory of God, in the *Face of Christ*; who is the *Brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person*.

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When we treat upon divine Providence, under a Variety of Considerations, we speak of our Lord Christ, as having all *Power in Heaven and Earth*, and the *Government upon his Shoulders*. * When the Motion of the Wheels of Providence appears, with the Marks and Signatures of Infinity and Incomprehensibility upon it, we then observe our Lord hath refer'd to an Hereafter, for the Knowledge of the amirable Harmony, Uniformity, and Glory of what he now doth.

We often repeat in our Assemblies the Christian Watch-Word, **BEHOLD THE LORD COMETH!** We present to View the Terrors and Glories of the last Judgment, and declare *Jesus Christ*, Lord and Judge of all.---We persuade Sinners to believe our Report of him now, as ever they would be prepared for that Time, that End of Time, when he will *be revealed in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel.*

We often remind true Believers of their being habitually prepared for every Event of Divine Providence, and exhort them to see to it, that they be actually. We call upon them still to repair to *Jesus Christ*, by an applicative Faith, for all necessary Supplies of Grace and Comfort. We tell them of their ample Treasures, glorious Immunities, and royal Prerogatives. We open to their View (if possible) all the Blessings contained in the many great and precious Promises of the evangelical Covenant, which have Relation to the Kingdom of Providence, the Kingdom of the Gospel, the Kingdom of Grace, and the Kingdom of eternal Glory. We tell that the Promises are to be applied, as being *in Christ, yea, and in him*, Amen, *to the Glory of God*; and that all the Blessings included in them, are the Fruits of his Merit, conferr'd by his Bounty, and sealed with his Blood. We exhort them to celebrate the Praises of the *Lamb*, as *one* infinitely worthy, *to receive Blessing, and Honour, and Glory, for ever and ever.* I might proceed largely on this-wise, and observe that we preach much concerning Regeneration, Sanctification, Justification, Adoption, and the Benefits which accompany and result from them; and that we consider them all with proper Relation to Christ. But these and many more Points, are in Part, comprized in what has been before hinted at; and tis needless to multiply Words, while I only propose to exhibit to View, by Way of Specimen, in some select Instances, how we endeavour to have a constant Reference to our Lord Christ in Preaching; That he is the Sum and Substance of our Report.

The Reasons and Motives are numerous; a few of them only may now be touch'd upon.

Jesus Christ is and ought to be, the Sum and Substance of our Report; for he is the Sum and Center of Divine Revelation. The Christian Religion is a Report of him, who *was declar'd to be the Son of God with Power.* The Scope of all the Prophecies and typical Psefigurations was, to shadow and point out Christ, and direct to him for Salvation. We find much said in the Old Testament, about the Person and Offices of Christ, and the Grace and Salvation which was to come by him. The New-Testament reveals him more fully.---The whole Scripture is a Testimony of Christ, and of the absolute Necessity of Faith in him, in Order to Salvation. *In him are*

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hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge; that is, the Wisdom and Knowledge of God, in his Counsels concerning the Vocation, Sanctification, and Salvation of his People. The whole Superstructure of the Christian Religion is founded upon Christ; *No other Foundation can any Man lay, than that which is laid.* All the Duties of the moral eternal Law, and all the Precepts of the Gospel, have, some Way, a Respect and Relation to our Lord Christ. We are to yield Obedience to the Law, and Precepts of the Gospel, as given by him, and receiving Inforcements from him. There is no Duty but what we are obliged to perform, in Faith through Christ, on the Motives of the Love of God in him, by Grace derived from him, and with Reliance on his Mediation. All the Glory, Life and Power of the Christian Religion, as such, and as sealed in the Heart of Man; all the Benefits and Privileges we receive by Virtue of it, have a Reference and Relation to *Jesus Christ*. Inconceivable Blessings are purchased by him, treasur'd up in, and conferr'd thro' him. Without an Interest in him by Faith, there can be no justifying Righteousness, no real Holiness, no eternal Happiness for us: Therefore Christ is the Sum of all we are to report and preach.

Further, By Virtue of our Office and Commission, we are under Obligation, in Point of Fidelity, to make Christ the Sum and Scope of our Preaching. We stand in a special Relation to our enthroned Saviour, *Christ Jesus*, the Lord: We are in a peculiar and solemn Manner, separated and dedicated to his Service: Our Commission to preach we receive from his Authority: Our Instructions and Directions from his Gospel. And, according to them, we have nothing to preach but Christ, or the Gospel, which are Terms of the same Import. He who hath authorized and intrusted us to preach, hath told us what we are to preach; and this is the Doctrine contained in his Word. This we are bound to declare to Men, and to do it with Reference to him: Faithfulness in our high and important Trust, requireth thus much. We are then, *to preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord and Saviour*. To decline reporting of him, is actually undoing what we are set apart for; 'tis with a tremendous Risk to run counter to our Commission and Instructions. Necessity is upon us; yea, *Woe* unto us, *if we preach not the Gospel*.

If we would be successful Ministers of *Jesus Christ*, it becomes us to make him the Sum and Substance of our Report. We are not to be actuated in the Discharge of our high and holy Office, from a View to our own Honour and Applause among Men; but with pious Aims to the important Ends thereof; that God may be thereby glorified thro' *Jesus Christ*; and in Subordination hereto, we are to endeavour the spiritual Good, and immortal Welfare of the Souls of Men: In order to which, 'tis of the last Importance, that we preach the Gospel. 'Tis granted, that we may, by the Grace of God, be faithful in the Discharge of our sacred Intrustment; and yet not be eminently successful. If we are faithful, we may take the Comfort of it; yet 'tis a Sort of mournful Pleasure, if we are not successful: For, as faithful, we have a solicitous Concern for the Success of our Ministrations; that our Hearers may experimentally know the Gospel of Christ to be the

Power of God to Salvation. Now, 'tis the Gospel that hath a Divine Fitness in it, to attain the important Ends of our Ministry. The Gospel is suited in its own Nature, happily suited, to the great Design of working Wonders of Salvation on sinful Creatures.

Were all witty Talents and Excellencies united in a Minister, and employ'd in preaching, he is never like to answer the Ends of the Gospel Ministry, if he throws aside the evangelical Scheme of Salvation: All his refined Speculations, polite Address, and laboured Charms of Eloquence, will never reconcile one Soul to God. The Truth is, the whole Success of our Ministry, in the saving Effects thereof, depends upon the Co-operation and almighty Energy of the Holy Spirit: And 'tis Presumption to expect his Concomitancy, unless we make Christ the Sum and Scope of our Preaching. 'Tis this Report which hath been follow'd with glorious Success; the greatest Wonders in the World have been wrought by it: The blind Minds of Sinners have been enlightned with the Dawnings of an immortal Day; their Hearts of Stone have been turned into Hearts of Flesh; their aspiring Wills have been bow'd to the Cross of Christ by this Report. The usurping Powers of Darknes have been subdued, and Sinners by Thousands and Thousands, translated out of the Kingdom of Satan into the Kingdom of God; that Kingdom of Light, Purity, Love, Peace, Joy and Glory: The Dead in *Trespasses* have been raised up, and brought to walk in the Fear of God, and Beauties of Holiness, by this Report. This Report, in its glorious Simplicity, hath triumph'd over the Passions and Prejudices of Mankind the World over, and filled the whole Earth, with eternal Monuments of the Redeemer's Honour, Riches, Power, Grace, and Love; it hath nourish'd the vital Flame of Life, in the Hearts of Believers; by it they have obtain'd growing Meetness for eternal Blessedness; it hath produced in all Ages, Joy and Rejoicing, Thanksgiving, and the Voice of Melody in the City of God: 'Tis this Report which the Lord Commands the Blessing upon.

How important, how excellent, is the Theme! Never were the Ears of Men saluted with a Report equally weighty. Eternal Salvation depends upon the Knowledge and Belief of this Report. How surpassingly excellent it is, in contemplating upon it, new discover'd Glories for ever open to View; there are Depths in it hid from the Eyes of all Living:---How copious, rich, and unsearchable? No Tongue of Man or Angel can declare its Excellency: Surely it deserves Priority of Regard.

Thus to report, is to imitate the bright Examples of faithful Preachers in all Ages of the Church. The Prophets all made Report of Christ; to Him *they all give Witness*. Our Lord Christ, whilst upon Earth, made Report of himself: He published the Salvation he himself is the Author of. The Apostles preached Christ: He was the main Subject they insisted upon, as is evident by their *Epistles*. And thus have faithful Ministers, in all Ages, made Christ the Sum of their Report:---Such regular Examples, have in them the Nature of binding Precepts.

Finally, would we hold Communion with Christ in our Work; be able with Joy, at the Day of Judgment, to render an Account to him thereof; and receive a glorious Reward from him; he must now be the Sum of our reporting and Preaching. It is much to be desir'd, that we may enjoy his
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gracious Presence with us, and hold Communion with him in the Work assign'd us : 'Tis a Work so very great and arduous, the Temptations and Discouragements that attend it so numerous, we ourselves so weak and insufficient for it, that we stand in Need of constant Supplies of Grace from our Lord Christ, in order to the due Discharge of it. And unless we enjoy the gracious Presence of our Lord with us, we are not likely to do much for his Interest in the World; nor to have spiritual Comfort in the Performance of Duty : His Presence with us in a Way of Grace, and special Assistance renders all Duties pleasant Exercises. Altho' Fidelity is not the meritorious Cause hereof; yet without Fidelity, (which requires that we preach Christ) 'tis in vain to expect his Presence with us. And the Day is hastening, when we must appear before his Judgment Seat, and render to him a solemn Account of the Ministry we have received : And then our Conduct will be reviewed, and Examination made, how far we have answered our Trust. To make a dreadful Supposition. If a Minister is then found to have preached himself, and not Christ; to have sought to please Men, and not the Lord; to have wickedly betray'd the Honour of God, and Interest of Christ; and to have injured the Souls of Men : What Amazement and Confusion will then overwhelm him? What Horror, Tribulation and Anguish will then seize upon his guilty Heart; himself being disapproved of the great Judge, after having served as an Herald !---Happy, thrice happy, in that important Day, *those Ministers* who shall be found faithful, and approved of by their Lord and Judge ! They shall receive a gracious Reward for Fidelity, in reporting of Christ, and fulfilling their Ministry ; they shall then enter into the Joy of their Lord ; they shall have bestowed upon them a *Crown of Life* that *fadeth not away* : They shall shine as the Stars ; yea, as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father ; for those that honour the Lord in the faithful Discharge of Duty, *he will honour*, honour with unperishing Glory. Here then we have presented to our View, as Inforcements to Fidelity, in the Discharge of the Duties of our high and holy Office ; especially with Relation to making Report of Christ,---the whole Tenour of Divine Revelation ;---the commanding Authority of our Lord and Saviour, our Office and Commission ;---the Glory of God, the Honour of Christ, and the eternal Salvation of Souls :---The Importance and Excellency of our Theme ;---the Examples of the Faithful ;---our own present Comfort, the eternal Judgment, and the immortal Crown of Glory.

I proceed now to the Second general Head.

Secondly, To shew that there is a Manifestation of the Power of God, when our Report concerning *Jesus Christ*, is effectual to saving Faith in them that hear.

The Prophet in our Text, lamented the Want of a saving Faith ; for it was the Want of such a Faith, as is obtain'd by the Lord's revealing his Arm : And hereby is pointed out the Necessity of a Manifestation of Divine Power, in order to saving Faith, in them that hear the Gospel : There is no saving Faith where the Lord's Arm is not revealed. There are many who yield a meer naked Assent to the Truths of the Gospel, that yet want saving Faith : Saving Faith includes in it, Assent to the Gospel

Report; yet naked Assent is not believing with the whole Heart to Salvation, it being only an Act of the Understanding, without the Consent of the Will; and as such, no other than Reprobates and Devils may exercise. *Judas*, without Doubt, yielded Assent to the Truths of the Gospel, when he was a Preacher of the Gospel; and Devils believe and tremble. Saving Faith supposes antecedent Conviction of Sin, and Humiliation; for Unhumbleness and Pride are inconsistent with saving Faith. Previous to evangelical Faith, there is Conviction of Sin by the Law, a practical Sight and Sense of Sin and Misery, so as that a Person looks upon himself in a perishing Condition. There is an Apprehension of the Nature of Sin, its Guilt, and Punishment due to it: There is a Sense of Sin, original and actual, and of utter Helplessness in a Man's self, and Unworthiness to be helped by God. Saving Faith includes in it, Assent of the Mind to divine Revelation, to the condemnatory Sentence of the Law as just, and to the Declaration of the Gospel: That God, in his Love and Grace, will pardon and justify Sinners, through the Blood and Mediation of *Jesus Christ*. It supposes an Illumination of the Mind, by the Holy Spirit; whereby we are enabled to behold the glorious Excellency of God and *Jesus Christ*; the Riches of divine Grace, and the Suitableness and Safety of the Way of Salvation, as proposed in the Gospel. And by the almighty Energy and irresistible Operation of the Divine Spirit upon the Heart, we are enabled to renounce all other Ways and Means, for the attaining of Righteousness, Life and Salvation; and cordially and sincerely to approve of, consent unto, and acquiesce in the Way of Life and Salvation of Sinners by *Jesus Christ*, as proposed in the Gospel; as an Effect of divine and infinite Wisdom, Love, Grace and Goodness; and as suited to all the Wants and Exigences of guilty convinced Sinners.

We are at this Time divinely enlightened and assisted, to believe the Record which God hath given of his Son: And upon the Credit of his Testimony, to receive *Jesus Christ*, as offer'd in the Gospel. By the Effect of God's Act on the Mind and Will, we consent to the Terms of Salvation, we receive Christ: He is not forced upon us, but accepted from a Light that commends, and a Will that desires him: No Violence is offer'd to the Will, we are made the Lord's willing People in the Day of his Power; and as call'd to *Glory and Virtue*, are inclin'd, and enabled to walk in all God's Commandments, from a gracious Respect unto him: For Holiness of Heart and Life, doth accompany and flow from Faith in *Jesus Christ*. Now, tho' the Word may be used, as a Mean in all this; yet it is made effectual only by almighty Power: Meer moral Suasion, with all its Charms, will not, cannot be sufficient to produce saving Faith in them that hear the Gospel. The Holy Ghost makes Use of rational Discourses, and Descriptions of Christ, in order to Faith in him; and the more clearly and powerfully we make Report of Christ, and the more weighty our Arguments and Motives, to persuade to Faith in him, so much the better; yet the Success of all depends intirely upon a divine Efficiency. The Heart of Man is naturally wholly opposite to Faith in *Jesus Christ*: Men hate the Light of Conviction previous to Faith, because their Deeds are evil. Men are sanctified

by Faith in *Jesus Christ*; and the reigning Enmity of the Heart against Holiness, renders it diametrically opposite to Faith: Salvation by Faith in Christ, is in a Way of free and sovereign Grace, which is intirely opposite to the proud and aspiring Nature of Man; prompting of him to be self-sufficient and independent, to be his own Saviour, and an Enemy to the Soul-humbling Terms of the Gospel; ---as it is written, let him *that glorieth, glory in the Lord.*

The Mind of Man is naturally set against Faith in Christ: Men are for finding out some other Way of Salvation, than that which the Gospel proposes. The learned *Rabbi* must crucify his *Whys* and *Wherefores*, that he may believe the Gospel. *Faith* that is saving, *stands not in the Wisdom of Man, but in the Power of God.*

The Will of Man is naturally set against Faith in Christ: There is not only an Inability to, but a fixed Enmity in the Will against Faith in Christ: It was a heavy and just Charge our Lord brought against some in his Day, and now lies against many; *Ye will not come unto me.*---The carnal Affections of the Heart, are all set against Faith. Not to multiply Words, such is the Ignorance, Impotency and Enmity of Man's Heart; such the Opposition of it, and of Satan, and the World to Faith; and such the Nature of saving Faith, that nothing short of Almighty Power, can conquer the Opposition, and produce evangelical Faith. There must be a Power join'd by the Holy Ghost, with Motives beyond the moral Force of them, or there will be no Faith to Salvation. There never was an Instance, from the Morning of the World to this Day, nor will there be to the End of Time, of a true Believer in Christ, without supernatural Illumination, and a powerful Work of the Holy Spirit upon the Heart. Agreeable hereto, the holy Scriptures ever speak of saving Faith in Man, as the Work of God. They declare that those who *come to the Son, are drawn by the Father*; that Faith is wrought by the *exceeding Greatness of his Power*, even by such Power as was wrought in Christ when he was raised from the Dead: They testify that Faith is *the Gift of God*; that he works in us *to will, and to do of his good Pleasure*: That he *fulfils the Work of Faith with Power*. We find Faith rank'd among evangelical Mysteries, and that 'tis emphatically call'd the WORK OF GOD: The Power of God is then surely manifested, when our Report of *Jesus Christ* is truly believed, manifested in the Work of Faith, and revealed to them who believe, who have a *Witness* hereof in themselves. But I must pretermitt many Things,---and proceed,

Thirdly, To shew, that it affords a just Foundation for our Regret and Lamentation, that so few truly believe our Report concerning *Jesus Christ*.

When we speak thus, it must be taken as granted, that we make our Report, according to the Mind of God made known in his Word: And 'tis here supposed, that we propose and make Christ known, as the Object of People's Faith; and that 'tis their indispensable Duty to believe in him. 'Tis here supposed, that we ought to observe, what Fruit and Success our Ministry hath among People, that we may duly adjust our Prayers and Praises; our rejoicing and mourning, with Reference to them. And 'tis supposed, that there are some who do not believe our Report; some possibly

do not so much as yield an Assent to it; others have only an historical Faith, and are under the Wrath and Curse of God. Preaching the Gospel, and saving Faith in them that hear, are far from being commensurable, and of equal extent: 'Tis the dismal Character of many, they *make light of the Gospel of Christ*; and this is Matter of great Lamentation. The inspir'd Penman was, doubtless, in the Right, when he complain'd, as in our Text, of the Want of Faith in them that hear the Gospel. He reported of the Blessed Redeemer, as transacting all our Concerns with God, in the Covenant of Redemption, under the Character of the great Mediator: The Love of the Saviour reign'd in his Heart; the *Law of Kindness* dwelt on his Lips; the *Gospel of Peace* flow'd from his Tongue: Yea, he lifted up his Voice like a Trumpet; he pour'd abroad the joyful, the melodious Sound, and proclaim'd the glad Tidings of free and eternal Salvation by the Son of God. But, alas! *Who hath believed the Report?* He foresaw the Lustre and Efficacy of the Gospel would be under a Vail, that Multitudes of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, would have no Eyes to discern their spiritual Interests, and eternal Concerns; no Inclinations to embrace the Gospel of Peace:--- Therefore his Passions beat unalterable mourning Pity; his Soul breathed out the Tokens of exquisite Anguish. Other Prophets, who made like Complaints upon similar Occasions, were not impos'd upon, in apprehending they had just Grounds so to do.

Surely the Divine Redeemer did not err, when he was *griev'd* for the Unbelief of Sinners, and dropt his Tears over them. When the Report of the Gospel is truly believed, the excellent, the important Designs of the ancient, the eternal Covenant, are accomplished; all the Perfections of God are declaratively glorified; his Laws observed; his Name spiritually worshipp'd; His Praise celebrated; his Grace admir'd. The Lord Redeemer, the King of Glory, is lov'd, obey'd, adored, and so honoured: Precious immortal Souls, who were *alienated from the Life of God*, are brought near to him, by the Blood of the *Lamb*, made spiritually wise, truly holy, really happy, in communion with God now, and firmly intituled to future perfect Purity, inconceivable and eternal Glory. Blessed Consequences! But woeful, when it's the Reverse of all this; and this is not all:--- For, by disobeying the Report of the Gospel, they cast the vilest Contempt on God, who is our ultimate End; the supreme Good, the only Soul-satisfying Portion; and upon the great Redeemer, whose *Blood* they *tread under their Feet*; * and upon the Holy Spirit, whose Motions they resist. They accuse the whole Trinity of Falseness; for there are three that bear *Record*,--- that eternal Life is to be obtain'd by Faith in *Jesus Christ*. They virtually prefer the Service of the Devil, and the Gratification of their accursed Lusts, to the Service of God, and the Redeemer; and eternal Damnation to everlasting Salvation. They contract immense Guilt; which, if persever'd in, will plunge them into remediless, aggravated, and eternal Misery. These Things are truly deplorable, much to be lamented. How affecting it is, that the Gospel Ministry should be misimproved by Sinners, thro' their Infidelity; that the Word of eternal Life, shou'd become a *Saviour of eternal*

Death:

* *Hebr. x. 29.*

Death: That they suck Poison from the Flowers of *Paradise*, from the Blossoms of the Tree of Life? Lamps are light up, fed with fresh Oil, and kept burning; and from under the Light of them, unbelieving Sinners, with mountainous Loads of Guilt upon them, go down to *Blackness of Darknes for ever*. Our present Comfort, as Ministers of the Gospel, and our future additional *Joy in the Day of Christ*, by the Success of our Ministrations, amidst the foregoing great Prospects, seem scarce to deserve a Mention; and I perceive it is Time, yea, more than Time to pass on,

Fourthly, To conclude, with an Application, by Way of Address.---

I shall take Occasion, from what has now been said, to make an Address; in the first Place, to the Ministers of the Gospel here present:

My Reverend Fathers and Brethren,

I Acknowledge my Unfitness, to speak from this Place at this Time; but in that you have assign'd me the Province of Preaching upon this solemn Occasion, you have intitled me to the Liberty of an Address.

Permit me then to assure you, that 'tis not from the least Shadow of a Suspicion in my Heart of a Deficiency in any one of you, with Reference to the subject Matter of your Report, as Ministers of the Gospel, that hath influenced me to treat upon the preceding Subject, in your Audience; nor have I herein aimed at being your Instructor; I am but your Remembrancer. I rejoice, greatly rejoice, if your Minds are refresh'd, by contemplating once again, upon the Duty and Dignity of the Ministerial Office, as in the Review of the subject Matter of your Report. With Soul-humbling Pleasure, you are certainly disposed, often to revolve in your Minds, whose Ministers you are: Yes, *my Brethren*, you are willing every Hour, to recollect, that we are not the Ministers of *Socrates*, or *Plato*, or *Seneca*, but the Ministers of *Jesus Christ*; and that as such, 'tis our Business to promote his Honour, by making due Report of him.

As we are *Stewards of his Mysteries*, we are to endeavour, both to keep and dispense them, with all good Fidelity: Surely, nothing can be more conducive to the Advantage of Christianity, and by Consequence, to the World, whose Happiness is so much concerned in its Support and Success. How high, how excellent, important and pleasurable, the Work assign'd us! To be studying and preaching a glorious Christ, is a glorious Employment; for it bears an eminent Proportion to the Excellence and Dignity of him of whom we make Report; and the great Consequences thereof. Happy and glorious the Station allotted us by Providence, which gives us so great an Opportunity of promoting the Honour of so dear a *Name*, as that of *Immanuel*; and the spiritual Good and eternal Happiness of immortal Souls. How arduous and difficult the Work? It might even be dreaded by the Angels of Heaven, while assign'd to us Worms of the Dust. What rich Furniture is necessary, what Knowledge, what Zeal, what Affection, what Application of Mind, to be suited for the whole; yea, to be fit for any Part of this Work! I am apprehensive you have prevented me, in reflecting on the Reason we have to *humble ourselves* deeply, in the Presence of the Divine Majesty, while we this Day remember our Faults and Deficiencies. In making our Report of the glorious Redeemer; how far, alas! how

far have we fell short of that Light, Love, Faith, Zeal, Skill, Resolution, Stability, Compassion, Activity, Holiness, and spiritual Elevation of Soul, which is required of us; and renders *meet* for such an Employ! What Self-seeking, Self-Confidence, Infidelity, Formality, Carnality, inglorious Neutrality and Impurity, we find cleaving to us! *If thou, Lord, shou'dst mark Iniquities: O Lord, who shall stand?* Amidst innumerable Infirmities, I trust, *my Brethren*, we are now in the Possession of that sublime Pleasure, which results from a Consciousness of Fidelity, in adhering inflexibly to our sacred Instructions, as to the Matter of our Report; and from having the Glory of God, our primary View, and in Subordination thereto, the Salvation of Souls. But, Oh! why have not our Prayers been more frequently presented, and fervently made, for the Presence of our Lord with us? How should we tremble, lest we say, in his Name, *what* is unworthy of him; or in a *Manner* that becomes not our glorious Lord, who speaketh by us, when we declare his real Will. You will suffer me to drop a Word of Exhortation, wherein I speak (as I have done) as much to myself as to any: In the View of the Nature, Importance, Difficulty, and Consequences of our Work, as call'd to Report of Christ: Let us be excited to seek, importunately and incessantly to seek, the Aids and Assistance of the Holy Spirit. For our Encouragement, let us ever keep our Minds believingly attentive upon our Title to that blessed Promise, *Lo, I am with you always, even to the End of the World.* *

Lo I am with you, to qualify and succeed you in your Work; to comfort, defend and assist you. Which Promise, we believe, includes in it something more, than meer common providential Influence and Protection. We discard the Thought, that such Promises are given, with a Design to supersede, study, and Preparation for the Service of the Sanctuary: We pretend not hereby to immediate Inspirations and Revelations of new Truths; but we apprehend, that we have Warrant and Encouragement to seek and expect the Aids and Assistances of the Holy Spirit, to lead and guide us into all Truth; to enlighten our Minds, that we may discern the moral Beauty, infinite Excellence and Importance of revealed Truths; and to afford Assistance in the Delivery of them, whereby we are enabled to preach with such Freedom and Enlargement of Heart; with such Clearness, Power, and Pathos, as we could not, left to ourselves, destitute of his special Influence and powerful Assistance. We eminently stand in need of the gracious and spiritual Presence of our Lord with us, to give us Experience and Wisdom for our Work; to dispose us to preach those Truths, that especially tend to do People Good; to inflame our Hearts with Zeal, for the Glory of God, and Salvation of Souls; to furnish us with undaunted Courage, to help us to speak like *Boanerges*; to enable us to set before our Hearers, in lively Colours, their Sin and Danger, and to direct them in a right Manner to Christ and eternal Glory. If the Holy Spirit be poured forth on Ministers, 'tis render'd hopeful, his Operations will not be long suspended from the People's Hearts. It hath been observ'd, that *Jerusalem* is soon to be called *the Throne of the Lord*, after he gave them *Pastors according to his own Heart.* §

When

* Matt. xxviii. 20.

§ Jer. iii. 15, 17.

When we preach in *Demonstration of the Spirit and of Power*, it has the greatest Aptitude and Tendency to go to the Hearts of People, and to do Good ; but then, we ever remember, that there is no necessary and inseparable Connection between such Preaching, and the Salvation of them that hear : For, *who will believe our Report*, unless the Arm of the Lord is revealed ? *Paul* may plant, and *Apollos* water ; but 'tis God, that giveth the Increase.

Let us then still view ourselves in the interesting Light of successful Ministers of *Jesus Christ*, and apply to the Throne of Grace for the Blessing of God upon our Report. Verily, of all Men in the World, we need the Spirit poured out upon us, in a Kind of celestial Torrent, that we may wrestle and prevail in Prayer.---But if, after all Attempts used to become successful, we find Occasion to utter the ancient Complaint, Who hath believed our Report ?---on our Part, 'tis just, 'tis generous : let us mourn apart ; let us mourn together. Beholding the Glory of God, as it shines in the Face of *Jesus Christ*, we tell Sinners, that infinite Wisdom hath devised an admirable Expedient for our Redemption ; that when sovereign Mercy hath its compleat Exercise, and infinite Love stoops down even to the Deeps of Hell, to fetch Rebels to Heaven : 'Tis consistent with the Rights and Honours of rectorial Holiness, that immense Depths of Wisdom, unexampled Truth and Faithfulness, inconceivable Power, immaculate and absolute Purity and Holiness, awful and inflexible Justice, sit on the Throne, and are display'd in the greatest Glory ; while infinite Mercy, and stupenduous Love and Grace triumph in infinite Honour, and reign eternally. But they are regardless of the admirable Illustrations of the Divine Perfections, and the inexpressible Glories that are reflectant in the Work of Man's Redemption ; they reject the eternal Counsels of God against themselves ; they slight and contemn the Love, Grace, and Mercy of God, in the most glorious Demonstrations thereof, that ever were made known under or above the Sun : Whose Soul can remain untouched under a View of these Things ? We tell Sinners of Love and Compassions of God our Saviour ; we point out his Blood and Wounds, which saved us from everlasting Death ; the Cross which he endured, and the Shame he despised to make us happy : But they refuse to behold the wonderful Scene on *Calvary*, and to hear the expiring Sighs and Groans, the triumphant Grace of a dying Redeemer ! They trample under their Feet his Blood, and all the Procurements thereof : Blood worthy to be gather'd up in golden Vessels by Angels, and procuring Favours immensely great, and infinitely necessary for Man ! Hereby their own plainest and immortal Interest is opposed ; our Lord Christ kept out of his Right, as great Creator and Redeemer : In these Views, ah ! what Grief, what Horror and Astonishment seizes upon our Spirits ! What wise Man, what good Man can refrain from Sorrow and Lamentation, while he beholds Contempt cast upon Divine Truths ? We proclaim Truths that are beautified by the Lustre of an eternal Excellency, and surrounded with the Characters of ineffable Wisdom and boundless Love : Truths that are gazed at, and contemplated upon, with Wonder and Delight, by numberless Clouds of adorning admiring Seraphs ; and which

furnish them with Matter for eternal Songs of Praise. Truths which are delivered at the rich Expence of the Saviour's Blood; and which have enwrapp'd in them the Glory of Heaven, and the Terrors of Hell: Yet Sinners deem them meer Words, empty Sounds, insignificant Cyphers.

How affecting it is, that the old Serpent should be so successful in his Essays to beguile and destroy the Souls of Men, while he endeavours, with Mists and Darknes from infernal Regions, to overcloud the Divine Amiability and Beauty of Truth. We report of the Light and Joy of a reconciled God; of the exalted and eternal Pleasures of the Sanctuary of Immortality, and all the Fruits of the Redeemer's Purchase; and that God is sincere in the Offer of them: But we cry to the Dead, and labour with the blind enslaved Followers of Satan. They seem determin'd to prefer that Darknes, which leads to the sulphurous and fiery Lake, to the Purity, Light and Felicity of Heaven; and to rush on against that glorious, that dreadful Arm, which drove back the devouring Flames, and pull'd us out of Hell. They seem resolv'd to oppose the Glory of God; the Honour and Interest of Christ; the End of the Law; the Design of the Gospel; their own present and eternal Happiness, to contract utmost Guilt; and to sink under redoubled Flames of Divine Vengeance for ever. When so dismal a State of Things presents itself to our View, "Surely it must fetch up a Groan from our Hearts, swelled with Sorrow, and draw down Tears from our Eyes." I have enlarg'd upon the affecting Theme, beyond what I design'd; but it will be consider'd, I am really pleading the Cause of some Thousands of Souls, under our pastoral Care and Charge, while I am exciting Compassion toward them, whom, methinks, I behold around me, as with united Suffrage speaking by me: Yea, which is yet more weighty, 'tis the Cause of our Lord and Saviour I am pleading. Unwilling to leave you under the Power of Ideas too gloomy, and overwhelming Sorrows; I presume Proximity will not intrench upon your Patience, if I take the Liberty to add. Let us cheer our Hearts with the lovely and glorious Prospect of that Day, that Day, when *the Earth shall be filled with the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Channel of the Sea*; and the World shall experimentally know the Power and Purity of the Gospel of Christ. Glorious Period, when the People shall all be taught of God; when *from the uttermost Parts of the Earth, sacred Songs instead of mournful Sighs shall be heard!* Is it not pretty evident, that *the fifth Vial* hath long since, been poured out upon the Throne of the Beast? * May we not suppose, that Divine Revelation doth warrant to conclude, that great and mighty, and in some Respects terrible Things, the Harbingers of Zion's King, are even now at the Door; ---And that the latter Day-Glory will soon dawn more and more, till in Meridian Splendor 'tis usher'd into the Church of Christ. Whether we shall live to see this glorious long expected Time, we determine not; mean while our Work is before us. Apparent Success would greatly tend to animate us; it would methinks serve to blow up a Spark of Zeal into a Flame; but we deem it not our Warrant for our Work. At the Word of Command from our Lord, we let down the Gospel-Net. Furnished with an

endless

endless Train, and an irresistible Force of Motives, let us go on, proclaiming Gospel-Truths; Truths surrounded with the Glories of our Saviour's Death and Love, and worthy to be received with Esteem, Affection and Admiration in Heaven, while so much undervalued on Earth. 'Tis inglorious to be seized by Cowardice and Sloth, to be vanquished by Discouragement, in so noble a Work. Behold yonder our exalted Lord, looking down from his Throne, to encourage and enliven us, by all possible Motives; among which 'tis not inconsiderable, that the Day is coming, when he will remember us, in full Proportion to our Fidelity and Diligence.

In the next Place, I would make an Address, in a few Words, to him who above all others, is concern'd in the Solemnity of this Day; who is now to be consecrated to the immediate Service of Christ, and the Souls of Men.

Dear Sir,

THE set and solemn Time, for your being duly authorized to discharge the Office of a Gospel Minister, is now come; the distant Prospect hereof, hath doubtless given you Occasion for much exercise of Mind, great Searchings of Heart, solemn Prayer, and pressing Anxiety: The near View adds growing Weight. You have, indeed, the highest Reason to be affected with the Greatness of the Work you are engaging in. When you take an accurate View of the Importance, and Difficulty of the ministerial Office, I am apt to believe you are ready to break out in the Apostle's Exclamation, *Who is sufficient for these Things?* The Reply is, "None of themselves are sufficient for it; and the few who are so, are indebted to the Grace of God, for that Sufficiency they have." We charitably hope, the great Head of the Church hath furnished you with suitable Qualifications for the Work;---that he hath adorned you with the noble Gifts and Graces of his Spirit. We trust the Love of Christ in its constraining and energetical Influence, like a strong and resistless Torrent, bears your Heart away before it to this holy Calling: We are therefore encouraged to hope you will be faithful in the Charge that is now to be committed to you. Suffer me, *Dear Sir*, to exhort you to engage in this sacred Work, with solemn Sentiments of the Nature and Importance of it; with pious Views to the great Ends thereof: Abandon, for ever abandon, selfish, ambitious and carnal Designs; the Pursuit of worldly Gain and vain Applause: Make the Glory of God, the Honour, and Interest of Christ, the spiritual Good, and eternal Felicity of immortal Souls, your great and governing Design, in entering upon, and in prosecuting the Work of the Ministry. Let it be your great Aim, earnest Care and constant Endeavour, to please your Lord and divine Master; and to be accepted and approv'd of him, in the Discharge of the various Duties of your sacred Function. As to the subject Matter of your Preaching, you have had, *Sir*, a short Description of what this must be, (alas, that it hath been no better!) set before you. *Jesus Christ* is to be the glorious Theme of your publick Discourses; the Sum and Substance of every Sermon, either directly or *reductively*. Some of the Reasons and Incentives hereto, have been glanc'd upon in the

preceding Discourse : Are they not weighty, beyond the utmost Verge of Conception? Permit me to exhort and beseech you, by all the mighty Powers of eternal Loving-kindness, by all the Wonders of divine Mercy and redeeming Grace, by all the mighty Things of Heaven and Hell, by every Thing sacred and solemn, that you never give just Occasion to have it said, " That you have reported too little of Christ in your Ministry, and " have not been zealous for the Glory of his Name." You will surely make it your Business, to spread the Knowledge of the Blessed Jesus in the World; as ever remembering you are a Minister of his Gospel. And in making Report of him, proceed in some proper Order, and distinct Method; study to *shew yourself a Workman, that needeth not to be ashamed.* Cast your publick Discourses into the most regular and becoming Scheme; observe a steady Strain of Thought, good Connection, and natural Transitions through the Whole of them; while you make Use of Art to conceal Art, and endeavour to avoid antiquated multiferious Divisions, and the dry Exactness of metaphysical Accuracy of Distinctions: Labour also to avoid meer loose Harangue, and a confus'd Huddle of Words, shuff'd together in a wild and incoherent Manner. Let so much of distinct Method be observable to your Auditory, (at least to the Judicious) as that they may be able to commit to the Memory, the main Branches of your Discourse, or the leading Point in View; least nothing be fix'd in the Mind for after-Improvement, and the Sermon be lost as soon as heard: Good Order hath Power and Beauty in it. Let your Stile and Diction be correct, masculine, nervous and striking; make use of such Words and Phrases, as will exhibit the most clear and bright Ideas of Truth, and answer the best Purposes. There is a Plainness, Simplicity, and Majesty of Speech that is most useful, beautiful, and most acceptable also, to the Bulk of our Auditory. Dress not up divine and glorious Truths, in a coarse and contemptible Garb; nor give them such Polish and Ornament, as does not conduce to their Usefulness: Remember you are a Preacher of the Gospel of him, who was the crucified Jesus; and that your Stile must be so far crucified as to be level to the Capacities of the Unlearned and Unskilful: Let not your Stile affect the Pomp and Magnificence of the Theatre, since that is inconsistent with that Gravity which becomes the Pulpit. Scholastic Nicety of Method, the formal Regularity of Argument, the constant Glitter of shining Phrases, and the endless String of rounded Periods,---instead of answering the Purposes of genuine Eloquence, only serve to stiffen a Discourse, carry too much the Appearance of Design, betray too laborious an Attention to Trifles, and depart too far from the Simplicity of Nature.---Let it appear, that you are too deeply impressed and awed with what you are about, to have any Leisure or Inclination for minding little Things. * Your Stile should ever be suitable to the Nature of the Subject you are handling. There is a golden *Mean* between

* See the Discourse on the Eloquence of the Pulpit, by Mr. James Fordyce, p. 5. 6. affix'd to the Art of Preaching, by Mr. David Fordyce, late Professor of Philosophy, in the Marischal College, Aberdeen; both which Discourses, (being Performances but lately publish'd) appear to me, to be the best of the Kind that I have seen, and which I wou'd here humbly take the Liberty to recommend the Perusal of to my younger
in the Ministry.

between a low Flatness, and the Dress of false Rhetoric. Let your Delivery and outward Gestures be natural, unaffected, lively, grave and decent: Action should be significant, and without Affectation. When you have studied your Matter well, and made due Preparation for the Sanctuary; should you allow the written Papers to remain closed in the Time of Delivery, there will be a peculiar Beauty, Excellency and Advantage, in such a Manner of Preaching, provided it be performed as it ought. You will sometimes deliver a lively Turn of Thought or pious Sentiment, which occurs to your Mind in the Time of Preaching, when 'tis pertinent to your Subject, altho' it was not penn'd down in your premeditated Notes. While you study and make Use of the sacred Oratory of the Pulpit, ever have a due Regard to the Information of the Mind; and hereupon, endeavour to strike the Passions, which are the Springs of Action. Labour to affect the Hearts of others, and watch over your own at the same Time. Indefatigably labour, to be furnished with the richest Measures of divine Knowledge, and of ministerial Gifts and Abilities; seek after much Acquaintance with Divine Truth, Gospel Mysteries, and Christian Doctrines; that you may be well accomplish'd, to make your Report concerning the glorious Jesus. Look upon it, the Excellency of a Gospel Minister, to be both a burning and shining Light; therefore be wise, be zealous. Let the Love of Christ, and the Love of Souls, constrain you most gladly to spend, and be spent, in making Report of him. Be truly faithful, really humble, and solemnly cheerful in your Work. Add Force to your Report of Christ, by the prevailing Charms of an unspotted Life and Conversation. Labour to live daily by Faith in *Jesus Christ*, and to keep up the Life of Religion in your own Soul. Be much in Prayer to God, for the Aids and Assistances of the Holy Spirit, and for his Blessing upon your Labours, that they may be successful. Be much in Prayer; a Man of Prayer; have your Pulpit in Heaven, if you would do much for Christ and Souls on Earth. When the Lord is with you, and works by you, give him all the Glory; and blush at, and mourn over, your own Defilements and Deficiencies. If you find Occasion to breath out the generous Ardour of your Heart, in the mournful Language of my Text; *Who hath believed our Report?* Remember it hath been the Lot of holy and wise Men before you. Wherein are we comparable to our Lord? Your Time for doing of it is but short; the Reward of your Diligence and Fidelity, glorious and eternal. But, I have almost forgot myself, it is more proper for Days to speak to you, and for Multitude of Years to teach you Wisdom. I only add, enter upon, and in the Strength of Christ, go on, Sir, in the honourable, important, arduous, and pleasant Work assign'd you. Magnify the Redeemer, who this Day calls you to report of him, to plead his Cause, defend his Truth, and display his Glory. Exert all your Powers, improve all your Talents, exercise all your Abilities, natural, acquir'd, and supernatural. In pursuing your darling, your charming Theme, there will open to View, untarnish'd Glories, ineffable Joys, Sabbaths of Rest, and Beatitudes too great for the Tongue of Men and Angels to express. May the Holy Spirit so assist you in reporting, and others in hearing, as that you and they may joy and rejoice together, in the Presence of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, at his coming; to whom be Glory, for ever and ever.

Lastly, I shall now close, with an Address to you that are to be Witnesses to the solemn Consecration soon to be attended.

You will readily make the Concession, that it becomes him, who is now to be separated to the Work of the Gospel-Ministry, to engage in it with awful Sentiments of the Nature and Importance of it; this very Concession, argues, that the Spectators of the Solemnity should attend with correspondent Seriousness of Mind: For that which eminently adds Weight to the Affair, is the Consequences hereof to the Souls of Men. 'Tis most probable, that the Report made by him, who is now to commence an authorized Preacher,--- will be to some immortal Souls, a Saviour of Life unto Life; to others of Death unto Death eternal. The solemn Work before us, enters the eternal State.----

You came hither at this Time also, to hear a Report once more, concerning *Jesus Christ*. From what you have heard, you are directed, how to make Choice of a Gospel Minister, when Divine Providence calleth you to act in such an Election. *Jesus Christ* is the Sum and Substance of a Gospel-Minister's Report.---

You will easily perceive, that we preach Christ to you, not only when we preach about his Nature, his Person, and his Offices; but also, by declaring the whole Council of God, with a proper Reference to him.

You have heard 'tis our Work and Business, to make a Report of Christ to you. The Theme is so glorious, the Tidings we bring to you so excellent and important: surely you will receive the same with Joy and Gratitude; and esteem Ministers of the Gospel, *very highly in Love for their Work's Sake*: As it is written, *How beautiful are the Feet of them that preach the Gospel of Peace, and bring glad Tidings of good Things.* * If any are otherwise minded, let them remember 'tis also written, *He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.* §

How much we need your Prayers, seeing our Work is so arduous and difficult, as well as honourable and glorious! *Finally, Brethren, pray for us.*

When our Report is effectual to saving Faith, give God the Glory; for 'tis he that makes it so.

Let such as truly believe our Report, thankfully and joyfully adore his Grace, and live to him, who has wrought Faith in them.

How greatly does it concern us all, to be much in Prayer, for the Influences of the Holy Spirit, to accompany the Report Ministers make of *Jesus Christ*; in as much as Faith, and by Consequence, Salvation depends hereupon. You have heard, and 'tis needful you often hear, that moral Suasion only will not produce saving Faith; the most powerful and excellent Preaching will not do it, unless the Influence of the Holy Spirit be associated therewith. What an admirable evangelical Preacher was *Isaiah*; yet how he complains of the Unbelief of them that heard his Report, as in our Text. What a pathetic Preacher was the Prophet *Jeremiah*; yet how does he lament the Unsuccessfulness of his Ministry! *The Bellows is burnt, the Lead is consumed of the Fire, the Founder melteth in vain.*--- What a charming Preacher

Preacher was the Prophet *Ezekiel*! Yet lo, he is only as a very lovely Song: They bear his Words, but will not do them. To ascend higher, what a royal, what an incomparable Preacher was the Divine Redeemer! The Son of God preached the Doctrine of eternal Salvation by himself: He was an Itinerant Preacher, and preach'd the Gospel to Multitudes: He was abundant in Labours, full of Zeal, Courage and Prudence: He spake with a superhuman Light and Power; never *Man* spake like him, so that many were *astonished at his Doctrine*: Yet what Complaints did he make of the Infidelity and Hardness of the Hearts of them who heard his Report! The Consideration of the Necessity of Divine Influences, in order to make the Word effectual to saving Faith, in them that hear it, should teach us to lie at the Foot of God's sovereign Grace, imploring the blessed Spirit to work Faith in us.

How deeply ought Sinners to be affected with their Condition, under the reigning Power of Infidelity! Did the Prophet *Isaiab* so greatly lament, and that so long since the Unbelief of Sinners in these Days? Do all faithful Ministers of the Gospel, (how dispassionate soever their natural Temper,) and all the Godly not only apprehend just Cause of Grief, but much lament the Infidelity of Sinners, and their deplorable Condition, on Account hereof? Oh, how ought Sinners to be affected, who, by their Infidelity, are under so much Guilt, occasion so much Grief, and are exposed every Moment to so great Misery, as will be the Consequence thereof!

Is it our Duty and Work, as Ministers of the Gospel, to make Report of Christ to you? 'Tis then your indispensible Duty, as well as Interest, to believe in Him we report, to the End you may receive the Offer of Christ in the Gospel. You have full Warrant, and utmost Encouragement to believe in him; and ought to endeavour it. God commands you to believe on the Name of his Son *Jesus Christ*; and he hath declared, that *whosoever* believeth in him, shall have everlasting Life. You ought to endeavour to believe: The infinite Power of God in working Faith, and our own Endeavours, are well consistent together: 'Tis God that *worketh in us to will and to do of his good Pleasure*; therefore we should *work out our own Salvation, with Fear and Trembling*. By Endeavours to believe, you acknowledge what your Duty is: You learn your own Inability, so necessary a Lesson of Instruction; you declare the Necessity of Dependence on God to work Faith, seeing in the Use of Means and Endeavours our God useth to come; You hereby profess, to prize Faith and Salvation; and you will hereby be the better prepared to give him the Glory, if he reveals his Arm, and worketh Faith in you.

Permit me then, to call upon you to believe the Report of the Gospel concerning *Jesus Christ*, and to believe in him: 'Tis of the last Importance that you believe. If you believe not the Report of the Gospel concerning *Jesus Christ*, you will perish inevitably, die inexcusably, be damn'd eternally, most aggravatedly. If you continue to reject *Jesus Christ*, your Ruin and Misery forever, is sure and certain; 'tis against God's Decree, to save Unbelievers so continuing: God hath stated the *Method*, wherein he will bestow Mercy, and never will recede from it; *whoever believes on Christ shall have everlasting Life*. Without Faith in Christ, there can be no Salvation

by Christ: There is no Mercy, no Salvation in God himself for Sinners, without Faith in Christ: *He that believeth not shall be damned.* You will die inexcusably; the grand Impediment of Faith, is intrinsecal, it lies in your own Wills: The Impotency of a Sinner is his not willing: Ye will not come to Christ that ye may have Life; ye love Darknes rather than Light. You will have none to blame at the last Day but yourselves; your Destruction is of yourselves; you have no Cloke, no Excuse for your Sins. Your Damnation will be eternal: As the just Demerit of your Sin, it will be your unhappy Lot to die a living and immortal Death, under the everlasting and insupportable Curse and Wrath of God: You will be punish'd with everlasting Destruction, from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power; enwrapp'd in easless, quenchless, and endless Flames of divine Vengeance, where the Smoke of your Torment will ascend for ever and ever. Your Damnation will be most aggravated; it will be proportioned to your Sin and Guilt, so much increased by Rebellion against evangelical Light. How amazingly great is your Sin and Guilt in rejecting Christ! You cast the utmost Contempt upon the Wisdom, Love, Grace, and commanding Authority of God; and deny to *Jesus Christ*, the Honour of his mediatorial Office; oppose all Obedience to God; condemn eternal Salvation, and act contrary to your own immortal Interest; by all which your Iniquity abounds, and you are rendered obnoxious to, and continuing in Unbelief, will fall under the *former* Punishments threatened in the Gospel. Your Obstinacy against the Light of the Gospel, and the Power attending it, renders *Sodom's* Condition more tolerable than your Case, who reject the *great Salvation* offer'd in the Gospel; and for whom, so continuing to do, is reserved Blackness of Darknes for ever; even this Heart-rending Accent upon your Misery, that Light came into the World, and ye loved Darknes rather than Light. The only Way to escape such Misery, is to believe in the Lord *Jesus Christ*: God hath promis'd to save those that believe on him. Though heavenly Glory is great beyond all Conception, and you unworthy of it beyond Conviction: God will bestow it upon you, if you believe in his Son *Jesus Christ*: He invites and urges you to come to Christ. The Design of the Gospel is, to bring Sinners to Faith in Christ; and to this End is the Ordinance of the Ministry appointed. As Ministers of the Gospel, we exhort and beseech you, by the Mercies of the living God; by the dear and glorious Name of our blessed *Jesus*; by the Riches of his Grace, and the inestimable Value of his Blood; by the eternal Joys of Heaven, and by the interminable Torments of Hell; even by the intolerable Weight of double Vengeance and immortal Anguish, to believe our Report concerning *Jesus Christ*. How long shall we lament and mourn your Unbelief? Believe, and remove the Burden from our Hearts; turn our long continued Sorrows into endless Songs of Triumph: We shall have Occasion to rejoice with you, upon your believing; *Jesus Christ* will greatly rejoice in the *Day of Espousals*: God himself will take Delight in it; Hell will repine; but Heaven and Earth will rejoice. To add no more, hereupon you will live in eternal Communion with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: For which God, of his infinite Mercy, prepare us all, through *Jesus Christ*; to whom be Glory and Dominion, World without End. AMEN and AMEN.

9 JU 64



THE NATURE OF
ORDINATION,

WITH

Its APPENDAGES opened;

Lai-Ordination examined and refuted,

AND

The Validity of *Presbyterian* ORDINATION
vindicated :

In a DISCOURSE delivered immediately after the foregoing
SERMON, and previous to the *Ordination* of

Mr. BENJAMIN TALLMAGE,
At Brook-Haven, on Long-Island, October 23, 1754.

To which is added,

The CHARGE.

By EBENEZER PRYOR, A. M.
Pastor of the *Presbyterian* Church in *Huntington, Long-Island.*

1. Tim. IV. 14. *Neglect not the Gift that is in thee, which was given thee by Prophecy, with the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery.*

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A DISCOURSE, &c.

Christian Brethren and Friends,

IN the Sermon just now deliver'd from this awful Desk, we have been entertained, from the Word of God, with many precious Truths, well adapted to improve our Minds, and affect our Hearts, at such a Season as this. And Duties of very great Importance have been urged, both upon Ministers and People, with an agreeable Pertinency and Pathos, suited to the Solemnity before us : So that the Discourse we have heard at this Time, may be considered as a sacred Prelude to the Ordination by and by to be attended, in Case no Bar shall appear to be in the Way.

But, inasmuch as Ordinations to the Work of the Gospel Ministry, are not frequent in these Parts of the Country ; and, it may be presumed, that few, comparatively, even of this large Assembly, have well studied the Point : I conclude therefore, that it will not be tho't improper nor unseasonable, and hope, not altogether unprofitable, if I should introduce the solemn Transaction before us, by opening the Nature of Ordination, with the Grounds and Reasons of its Appendages ; and then add something concerning the Right and Power of Ordination, pointing out that Order of Men to whom it belongs, under the New-Testament.

In Pursuance of which Purposes, I would observe, that the true Ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ, are a sacred Order of Men, separated to the special Service of God and his People, in the Gospel of his dear Son ; according to the Laws and Orders of his House, *which is the Church of the living God.* † For it is undoubtedly a Truth, That the Office of the Gospel Pastor, is as really a sacred Inclosure under the Christian Dispensation, as the Aaronical Priesthood was, under the Law ; and doth not lie open to those bold intruders, who, in the enthusiastick Heats of a blind and intemperate Zeal, vainly and presumptuously imagine, that they have a Call to the Work of the Ministry, from some strong Impulses or uncommon Impressions made upon their Minds ; which (considering the Disorders and Exorbitances Men of this Sort of Spirit and Complexion run into) are much more likely to come from beneath than from above ; it being certain, that no Man may take this Honour to himself, but he that (in a Sense) is called of God ; as was Aaron : § And so,

† *Heb.* iii. 6. † *1 Tim.* iii. 15.

§ *Heb.* v. 4. Altho' the Apostle applies this Text, referred to above, to our blessed Saviour's being invested with the Office of Mediator, as appears ver. 5. and has no special or immediate Reference to the Ordination of Gospel Ministers : Yet, if Jesus Christ, the great Minister of the Sanctuary, and true Tabernacle, which God pitched and not Man, (*Heb.* viii. 2.) was solemnly called, and introduced into the Office of his Mediation, by God the Father ; even in some Sense, as Aaron, who was not only qualified and fitted for the Office of the Priesthood, but consecrated to the Duties and Services of that Office, by a Compliance with those Ordinances, and an Observation of those sacred Rites, in that Case and for that Purpose appointed by God to be observed, under the Law, *Exod.* xxviii. xxix.---then, certainly, no Man now, upon any Pretence of an extraordinary Call, may venture upon the Duties of the Pastoral Office, under the Gospel ; but even Persons duly qualified and regularly called, must be separated to those sacred Services by Ordination, according to Scripture Precedents, and Divine Institution ; without which they have no Right to discharge the Duties of that Office.

so, according to the Gospel Constitution, enters by the Door into the Sheepfold; for all those that climb up some other Way, are Thieves and Robbers.

This Door by which the true Ministers of Christ enter into the sacred Inclosure, is Ordination, performed according to the Direction of the Holy Scripture, by those who are allowed of God, to be put in Trust with the Gospel, and enjoined to commit the same to faithful Men, who shall be able to teach others. § In this Way a Succession in the Gospel Ministry has been, and is kept up in the Christian Church; and will (no doubt) be continued to the End of the World: || By ministerial Ordination, of which you may take this Description, in a few Words; as followeth;

That Ordination to the Work of the Gospel Ministry, is the solemn Inauguration, or Scriptural Introduction of a well-qualified Candidate for the Ministry, into the publick Profession of that sacred Calling, and regular Exercise of that ministerial Power and Authority, which the Gospel Pastor receives from Jesus Christ, the great King, and supreme Head of the Church; to whom all Power in Heaven and Earth is given, by God the Father. * So that the Candidate, upon his Ordination, is invested with all the Powers of a Gospel-Minister, according to the Constitution of Christ's evangelical Kingdom in the World.

This Power, in all the Branches of it, being conveyed by Christ's Commission, in the Gospel, to all his Ministers, comes alone from him whom the Father hath given to be Head over all Things to the Church; † and not from Man, no, nor from any Number or Order of Men under Heaven, whether King, Bishop, Presbyter, or Laick. In this Sense, every Gospel Minister may be said to be not of Men, nor by Man; But, as Paul says, of himself, by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the Dead. Gal. i. 1. ¶

And yet, there is another Sense in which all the ordinary Ministers of the Gospel may be said to be by Men; inasmuch as their Investiture (requisite in order to a regular Exercise of that Power which they receive from Jesus Christ) is by Man, in their Ordination. One of the most solemn Transactions we are concerned with in this present World! And accordingly, it is to be attended and solemnized, with great Seriousness and Devotion, by Fasting, Prayer, and the laying on of Hands. Thus Paul and Barnabas were separated to the Ministry, of the Gentiles; as St. Luke informs us, Acts xiii. 3. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their Hands on them, they sent them away. †

As

† John x. 1. 2. § 1 Thes. ii. 4. 2 Tim. ii. 2.

|| Mat. xxviii. 20. * Mat. xxviii. 18. John iii. 35. † Epp. i. 22.

¶ Jesus Christ, as Mediator, being made Head over all Things to the Church, by Delegation from the Father, the ordinary Ministers of Christ derive all their Powers from him, as really as the Apostles did; tho' they cannot exercise those Powers in an orderly Way, as the Apostles did in their extraordinary Character, without Ordination by Men. But yet, as to the Source and Origin of their Power, they are not of Man, nor by Men.

† Altho' the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost, and an immediate Call from Heaven, were esteemed sufficient Qualifications, to justify the Apostles and their Fellow Labourers, in performing all the Duties of the ministerial Office among the Jews and their Profelites: Yet when the Gentiles were to be called and grafted upon the Jewish Stock, the Holy Ghost was pleased to appoint a mediate Way of introducing God's Servants into the Office of the Gospel Ministry, by Ordination. And as this was the Ground and Reason, of the Ordination of Paul and Barnabas, tho' extraordinary Ministers before; so it was to be the standing Method of separating Men to the sacred Service of the Ministry, thro' all the succeeding Ages of the Church.

As solemn Prayer, with Fasting, in this sacred Transaction, appears to be agreeable to divine Institution, it having been practised in the Apostolick and purest Age of Christianity, so it is highly reasonable; in as-much as those that are devoted to the important Services of the Gospel Ministry, need not only those divine Influences and Communications, which are necessary for Christians in a private Capacity, during their warfare State here below; but those special Aids of the Holy Ghost, and more plentiful Communications of Light, Life, Grace, and Power, requisite to a faithful and successful Discharge of the sacred Trust committed to them, as Ministers of Christ, (a) For the obtaining of which precious Blessings, it is fit we should, upon such solemn Occasions, humble ourselves before God, and pray, with Fasting. (b)

Imposition, or the laying on of Hands, is a sacred Rite or Ceremony, that has been used on various Occasions, and to diverse Purposes, in Times past. Such as the conferring the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost; (c) and working miraculous Cures. (d) Sometimes as a Token of an Execration or Curse; such was the Case of the Priests laying their Hands upon the Heads of the Beasts, that were slain as Sin-Offering under the Law: (e) And yet, more frequently, as a Rite of Benediction; as might be shewn in a Variety of Instances. (f) But for the most Part, it has been used as a sacred Rite of Consecration; whereby the Person upon whom Hands are imposed, is dedicated and devoted to some sacred Function; immediately relating to the Service of God and his People. Thus Moses laid his Hands upon Joshua, when he set him over the Congregation of Israel; then under a Theocratical Government, and gave him a Charge, *Numb. xxvii. 23.* And thus (as has been already observed) Paul and Barnabas (though extraordinary Ministers before) were ordained to the Ministry of the Gentiles, as Multitudes have been since in the like sacred Form.

Laying on of Hands in Ordination, seems to be designed partly as a Token of the Candidate's Consecration, or solemn Separation to the sacred ministerial Function; and partly as a sacred Rite of Benediction, pointing out the particular Person, who, in this solemn Transaction, is recommended to the divine Blessing, in Conformity to ancient Patterns of this Kind, both under the Old-Testament and the New. In both, the Ministers of Religion engaged in the Solemnities of an Ordination, observe a divine Institution, and thereby express their Dependance upon God's Presence and Blessing, to succeed the Person upon whom they lay their Hands, in the great Work to which he is thus devoted. For which Purpose, by solemn Prayer, with Fasting, they offer up their Requests to God, that he might be made an able, faithful and successful Minister of the New-Testament, not of the Letter but of the Spirit; (g) thereby recommending him to the Grace of God, (h) that by Help obtained from Heaven, he might fulfil the Ministry he receives of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God. (i)

This sacred Rite of laying on of Hands in Ordination, tho' it may be look'd upon by some, to be a Matter of little Weight and Consequence; and, indeed, setting aside the Consideration of divine Institution, it is small, in comparison of the other solemn Acts of Devotion, that go into the Constitution of a regular and scriptural Ordination: Yet, it cannot (as I conceive) be neglected without Sin. For it is of such Importance, in the solemn Transaction, that the Whole of Ordination, is sometimes express'd by it; as may be seen in St. Paul's Caution to Timothy, with Respect to the Persons he should ordain, *1 Tim. v. 22. Lay Hands suddenly on no*

I

Man

(a) *1 Tim. i. 11. vi. 20.* (b) *Act. xiv. 23.* (c) *viii. 17. 18. 19.* (d) *Mark vi. 5. Act. xxviii. 8.* (e) *Exod. xxix. 10.* (f) *Gen. xlviii. 14. Mark x. 16.* (g) *2 Cor. iii. 6.* (h) *Act. xiv. 26.* (i) *Col. iv. 12. Act. xx. 24.*

Man :--And probably the Holy Spirit has seen fit to make Use of this sacred Rite, as expressive of the Whole of Ordination, to put an Honour upon the Institution ; and to add Force and Weight to it, as an Act and Token of Office Power in the Ordainers.

Thus much of the Nature of Ordination ; the Essence of which lies principally in the Things I have mentioned.

But then, as to the Appendages of Ordination, it may be added, That the Candidate being thus solemnly separated to the sacred Function of the Gospel Ministry, by Fasting, Prayer, and the laying on of Hands, is now to be considered as one invested with all the Powers of the Gospel-Pastor and Teacher. And, accordingly, it is not only reasonable, but agreeable to Scripture, that a solemn Charge should be addressed to him, in the Name of the Lord.

The Work of the Ministry is of vast Weight and Importance ; the Difficulties, Discouragements and Temptations that Ministers meet with, in this arduous and difficult Work, are many, very many, and very great : And Ministers are Men of like Passions, Infirmities, and sinful Imperfections with other Men. § How expedient then, and necessary is it, that the great and important Duties of their sacred Calling, should be urged and inculcated upon them, by a solemn Charge, agreeable to Scripture Precedents. Such as that of *St. Paul to Timothy*, in his 2d Epist. 4th Chap. at the Beginning : Which you may take as a Specimen, in these Words, *I charge thee therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge both 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.*

Consequent upon the Charge, usually follows the Right Hand of Fellowship, † The Purport and Meaning of which (as I conceive) is this ; A publick Declaration and Acknowledgement of the ministerial Power and Authority of the Person ordained, as one regularly invested with all the Office Powers of the Gospel-Pastor and Teacher ; including in it, an Admission into ministerial Fellowship and Communion ; with an Engagement of mutual Assistance, both on the Part of the Ordainers, and on the Part of the Ordained, as there shall be Occasion, in the Service of one common Lord, and Advancement of one grand Interest, even that of the Redeemer's Kingdom among Men. For all the true Ministers of Christ, are Brethren and Companions, in the Labours and Tribulations of the Gospel ; and in the Kingdom and Patience of Jesus Christ : || And accordingly should, with one Heart and with one Soul, pursue the important Design of their sacred Mission.

Now, whatever Diversity of Practice there may be, as to Form ; yet (as I humbly conceive) these Things included in the Right Hand of Fellowship, may, without Impropriety, be expressed in a suitable Address, directed, especially and particularly to the newly ordained Minister ; accompanied with a giving the Right Hand, as a Token of such a Relation acknowledged, and such mutual Engagements stipulated.

This (I apprehend) was the Meaning of that friendly and fraternal Treatment, which *Paul* and *Barnabas* met with from three of the Apostles, after they were ordained to the Ministry of the Gentiles ; of which *St. Paul* himself gives the following Account ; *Gal. ii. 9. And when James, Cephas and John, who seemed to be Pillars, perceived the Grace of God that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas*

§ *Act. xiv. 15. Gal. iv. 13. 14. Jam. v. 17.*

† Tho' this Order has generally obtained by Custom ; yet, in my humble Opinion, there would be a greater Propriety in giving the Right Hand of Fellowship before the Charge. Forasmuch as the Candidate ordained, should be owned and acknowledged to be a Minister of Christ, before a Charge is addressed to him as such.

|| *Philem. 7. Rev. i. 9.*

Barnabas the Right Hands of Fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the Circumcision.---Accordingly, whatever Part of Christ's Vineyard his Ambassadors are employed in, whether as fix'd Pastors, itinerant Ministers, they ought to own, esteem, and treat one another as Fellow-Labourers, § Fellow-Helpers, * and Brethren beloved; † and should be received by all the Churches of Christ, wherever they are called to labour, whether stately or occasionally, as Messengers of God, || and Ministers of Christ. ‡

Furthermore, in-as-much as there are Duties of very great Importance, incumbent upon a People towards their Pastor, and upon the Churches of Christ, towards the Ministers of Religion; it is tho't proper by many, that as a solemn Charge is given to the Minister upon his Ordination; so a particular Exhortation should be addressed unto the People, over and above what may have been offered to these Purposes in the Ordination Sermon. And I persuade myself, that none will think such an Exhortation unsuitable or unseasonable upon an Ordination Day.

Thus I have given you some Account of the Nature of Ordination, with its Appendages: The various Articles of which, you may see exemplified, in the Ordination before us.

I shall now (with as much Brevity as is consistent with any good Degree of Perspicuity and Evidence) say something concerning the Office and Character of those that have a Right, according to the Gospel Constitution, to separate others to the sacred Service of the evangelical Ministry, by such an Ordination as I have described, or shew who have Power from Christ to ordain others to that sacred Service. And I hope you will afford me an attentive Ear, with an unprejudiced Mind, while I endeavour to shew you how this important Point is settled in the Holy Scriptures; which should be our dernier Refort in all Matters of religious Controversy: Those especially, that relate to positive Institutions, which ought to be determined by a *Thus saith the Lord*, or what is equivalent thereunto; and not by the Suffrage of Antiquity, or Judgment of Men, be they of never so great Fame.

And here, being persuaded that I have good Ground, not only from Reason but Scripture, I scruple not to assert and declare, negatively,

That the Right and Power of Ordination does not belong to the Laity, so called, by Way of Distinction from the Clergy, who are invested with the Powers of the Gospel Pastor and Teacher. For, altho' Prayer be a moral Duty incumbent upon all Men, according to the Dictates of the Light of Nature; and expressly enjoined in Holy Scripture, upon those that enjoy the Light of divine Revelation, even solemn Prayer, with Fasting, upon some special Occasions: Yet, such solemn Prayer, with the Imposition of Hands in Ordination, has something in it of positive Right; and is an Act and Exercise of Office-Power in the Church of Christ: Consequently, cannot belong to Laymen, who have neither Part nor Lot in this Office-Power. All the Pleas therefore that have been or can be made in Favour of Lai-Ordination, will not justify those Laymen, nor clear them from a profane and presumptuous Invasion of the ministerial Office, who venture upon the solemn Formalities of Ordination; since there is not so much as one Precept or Precedent for it, in all the Scriptures of the New-Testament: But it is plain enough limited to those that are invested with the Office of the Gospel-Pastor, as one special Article or Branch of their Office-Power. (a)

I

§ *Thef.* iii. 2. *Philem.* i. 24. * *2 Cor.* viii. 23. † *2 Pet.* iii. 15.

|| *2 Chron.* xxxvi. 16. *Mal.* ii. 7. ‡ *1 Cor.* iv. 1.

(a) As *Moses* was admonished of God, when he was about to make the Tabernacle, to make all Things according to the Pattern shewed to him in the Mount, *Heb.* viii. 5. compare *Exod.* xxv. 4. nothing was left to his own Invention, nor to the Fancy of the Workmen, or to the People's Humour: But the Will of God,

I go on therefore to shew you, positively, who the Right and Power of Ordination does belong to; or who are invested with Power from Christ to ordain others to the sacred Service of the Gospel Ministry. And

was to be religiously observed in every Article and Punctilio: So, undoubtedly, it is the Duty of the Gospel Church, and her Ministers, exactly to observe and strictly to adhere to all the Institutions of Christ made known, either by himself or his inspired Apostles, under the New-Testament. All his Orders must be observed, and Ordinances administered according to his Appointment; which is to be learned, either from Precepts or Examples, or both. That *Instruktion* of Christ to his Ministers and Churches, *Mat. xxviii. 20.* to observe all Things whatsoever he has commanded us, is of the same Import with that Admonition to *Moses*, mentioned above; and is solemnly enforced by those awful Words wherewith not only the Book of *St. John's* Revelation, but the sacred Canon of Holy Scripture is closed, *Rev. xxii. 18, 19.* For *I testify unto every Man that beareth the Words of the Prophecy of this Book, if any Man shall add unto these Things, God shall add unto him the Plagues that are written in this Book. And if any Man shall take away from the Words of the Book of this Prophecy, God shall take away his Part out of the Book of Life, and out of the Holy City, and from the Things which are written in this Book.*

Now it is certain, that Gospel Churches, and the Office of Gospel Ministers, as well as the publick Ordinances they administer, are Matters of Divine Institution; and tho' in them the Duties of natural Worship are attended and performed, yet that which relates to Modes, Orders and Ordinances; is principally, if not wholly, Matter of positive Right; being founded in, and springing from the sovereign Pleasurè of the great Head and King of the Church.

This is the Case with Respect to Gospel Ministers, whether ordinary or extraordinary; they are Christ's Ascension Gifts, *Eph. iv. 8, 11, 12.* God, by him, hath set them in the Church, *1 Cor. xii. 28.* Now how should we have known what Officers Christ hath set in his Church, had not he revealed it? Or that any one, as well as another, might not have been a Teacher, contrary to that of the Apostle, *ver. 29, 30.* *Are all Apostles? Are all Prophets? Are all Teachers? &c.* And then, tho' Reason may dictate some Things, with Respect to their necessary Qualifications, as divine Revelation has more fully done: Yet, how should we have known in what Way and Manner, and by whom, they are to be introduced into the sacred Function, if the Mind of Christ herein, was not made known to us in the New-Testament? Surely we must have been at a Loss. But as *Moses* was faithful to him that appointed him, in all his House, as a Servant, so Christ being more so, as a Son over his own House, (*Heb. iii. 2, 5, 6.*) hath given us sufficient Direction, not only as to the Manner of, but also, as to the Order of Men that are to transact this solemn Affair.

And if we should examine all the Ordinations of which there is any Account in the New-Testament, we shall find that they were performed by Gospel Ministers, either ordinary or extraordinary, and not the least Intimation of one Layman concerned in them as an Ordainer. Even the first Seven Deacons chosen by the Church were ordained by the Apostles, *Act. vi. 6.* And they (the Apostles) no doubt, ordained many others to the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments, &c. until the Church was furnished with a sufficient Number of Ministers, to manage this Branch of the ministerial Office; and then we find the ordinary Ministers of the Gospel, engaged in the solemn Work of Ordination, according to divine Direction. For thus *St. Paul*, under the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost, writes to *Timothy*, as one allowed of God, to be put in Trust with the Gospel; and directs him to commit the same to faithful Men, who should be able to teach others also, *2 Tim. ii. 2.*

compared

And here, let it be remembred, that the whole of Ordination is sometimes expressed by the sacred Rite of laying on of Hands, as has been already observed from 1 *Tim.* v. 22. to which may be added, *Heb.* vi. 2.

Now the laying on of Hands in the solemn Business of Ordination, is expressly spoken of, as belonging to, and an Act of the Presbytery; as is plain in *St. Paul's* cautionary Admonition to *Timothy*, with Respect to his own Ordination, in these Words, *Neglect not the Gift which is in thee, which was given thee by Prophecy, with the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery*; 1 *Tim.* iv. 14. Not a Word here, nor elsewhere in the Holy Bible, of the laying on of the Hands of Laity:—No, nor of the laying on of the Hands of the Episcopacy, or Consistory of Bishops, as superior to the Presbyterian Order. St.

compared, 1 *Thef.* i. 1. ii. 4. And he tells *Titus*, that this was one End for which he left him in *Crete*, to ordain Elders in every City, *Tit.* i. 5. or rather in every Church.---- Now, what Need of this, if the Right and Power of Ordination is in the Church, or belongs to Laymen. The Church might have ordained their own Ministers, and there had been no Occasion of *St. Paul's* leaving *Titus* at *Crete* upon this Account; nor giving those Directions to *Timothy*, which carry in them the Force of a Precept being given by divine Inspiration.

Moreover *Paul* and *Barnabas*, when destined to the Ministry of the Gentiles, tho' extraordinary Ministers before, were ordained not by the Church at *Antioch*; but by the Ministers of that Church, according to the Direction of the Holy Ghost *Act.* xiii. 1, 2, 3. *Now there were in the Church that was at Antioch, certain Prophets and Teachers.*--- *As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the Work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their Hands on them, they sent them away.* Here is an express Commission to those Presbyters in the Church of *Antioch*, to ordain *Barnabas* and *Saul*, alias *Paul*, but not a Word to the Church or Laity: And here is an Example of Presbyters ordaining according to the Direction of the Holy Ghost; and consequently (as *St. Paul's* Directions and Orders to *Timothy* and *Titus*, mentioned above) carrying with them the Force of a Precept, is a sufficient Warrant for the Ministers of the Gospel, in every Age of the Christian Church, to ordain others to the Work of the Ministry, when duly called to it. But a plain implicit Disapprobation of Lai-Ordination, since there is neither Precept nor Precedent for it in the New-Testament; nor so much as the least Hint of any Layman's being concerned in any of the Ordinations, we have an Account of in the Gospel, as an Ordainer.

It was a celebrated Saying of *Dr. Usber*, that *Ordinis est Ordinare*: And I think it is evident, from what has been said, that it belongs to the ministerial Office, as an inseparable Branch of it. And if we examine the principal Pleas made in Favour of Lai-Ordination, and lay them in the Ballance against what has been offered above, we shall find them to be light and trivial.

If the Church's Right of Election, be pleaded in Favour of Lai-Ordination, against what has been said above, as it is by some, who say, If the Church or People have a Right to chuse their own Minister, which is the Greater, then they have a Power to ordain him which is the Lesser: I answer,

Tho' it be allowed that the Church or People have a Right to chuse their own Pastor, under proper Limitations; such in particular, as submitting the Qualifications of the Candidate, to the Examination, Judgment, and Approbation of the Presbytery, or proper Ministers of Religion, who must be allowed to be the most proper Judges: Yet, it is a Matter of Dispute, whether Election be, in every Respect, greater than Ordination; I trow not.---But yet, allowing it to be so, It will not

St. Paul, it is true, speaks of the Gift of God which was in *Timothy*, by the putting on of his Hands. His Words are these, *Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the Gift of God which is in thee, by the putting on of my Hands,* 2 *Tim.* i. 6. If by the Gift of God here, be meant the Gift or Office of the Ministry, (which undoubtedly is the Gift spoken of in the forecited Text) then either *Timothy* was ordained twice, once by the Presbytery, and another Time by St. Paul, or else the Apostle and the Presbytery were united, and acted in concert in his Ordination. But the former, *i. e.* *Timothy's* being ordained twice, (I think) can, by no

thence follow, that the Laity have a Right and Power to ordain, since (as I have shown) this Work is peculiarly limited to the Ministers of the Gospel, as belonging to their Office-Power: And not the least Countenance, either by Precept or Precedent, given to Ordination by Laymen. So that the Comparison between choosing and ordaining, little affects the present Argument.

If any object against what has been offered, and in Favour of Lai-Ordination, say, that in Case of Trespases or Offences, we are directed by Christ, to deal with an offending Brother privately in the first Place; and if the End of fraternal Admonition is not answered by this Method, then to tell it unto the Church, *Mat.* xviii. 15, 16, 17.---*If he neglect to hear thee, tell it unto the Church.*--- And from hence conclude the Authority of the Church or Laity, to be so great, that they are invested with the Power of Ordination. To such I would say,

That as there is a Diversity of Opinions about the Quality of the Church here mentioned; so it may be somewhat difficult to determine who, or what Church it is that Christ refers to here. If by the Church here be meant (as some would have it) only *Cætus Fidelium*, or the Church distinct from her Officers; it cannot be supposed that there is any Thing more than a Power of Judgment allowed unto them; surely not an Office-Power: For this would be a blending the Clerk and the Laick together; and a confounding the Distinction between Pastors and People, those that rule, and those that ought to be in Subjection, who are plainly distinguished in *1 Thes.* v. 12, 13. *Heb.* xiii. 7, 17 *et alibi.*---Hence I think it is evident, that the Church to which Christ refers here, is the Church to whom he has committed the Keys, and a Power of exercising them; and this cannot be meant of a Church without her Officers: For the Keys both of Doctrine and Discipline, are committed to the Church as organized, and so capable of exercising them, as is evident from *Mat.* xviii. 18. or rather to the Ministers and Officers of the Church, see *Mat.* xvi. 19. And if this be the Case (as undoubtedly it is) the objected Text will be so far from favouring, that it will militate against Lai-Ordination: For it is the Ministers and not the People that are to exercise the Power of the Keys. As in other Instances, so in this of opening the Door, and introducing well-qualified Candidates into the sacred Inclosure of the Gospel Ministry by Ordination.

But some may further object, and plead the Necessity of Lai-Ordination in some Instances; as particularly, in the Case of a Number of Christians being cast on a desolate Island, or providentially removed from the Rest of the Christian World, at such a Distance, that Ordination by Ministers cannot be obtained, tho' they have one among them otherwise qualified to be their Teacher. To which I answer,

That I very much Question, whether any such Case ever has been or ever will be true in Fact, of a Number of Christians, so separated from the Rest of the Christian World (in a Place where they might have the Liberty of attending the Ordinances of Christianity) that Ordination by the Hands of Presbyters, might not be obtained in due Time, tho' not so soon as might be wish'd. And that which very much strengthens the Doubt is this, that Jesus Christ, who not only knew what the State

no Means, be allowed as true in Fact ; for this plain Reason, because a Person ordained once, according to the Gospel Constitution, is, by Virtue of that Ordination, invested with all the Powers of a Gospel Minister. It would therefore be absurd and unreasonable to repeat the Solemnity, if not wretched trifling, and an impious Profanation of the sacred Ordinance, there being no Occasion for it. And if the latter be admitted, as some would have it, that the Apostle and Presbytery were united, and acted in Conjunction in *Timothy's* Ordination ; then, since we find no Marks of Distinction between the Apostle's Power, and the Power of the Presbytery in this Ordination, there is good Ground to conclude, that *St. Paul* acted in his ordinary Capacity, as a Presbyter or Elder ; for so the Apostles, (and *St. Paul* among the Rest) sometimes did, as might be made evident from sundry Passages in the Acts of the Apostles. § It is indeed evident, beyond Dispute, that they

of the Christian Church in all its Branches, from its first Erection, and of all the Children of God, even to the End of the World, would be, but was faithful in all his House as a Son ; has made no Provision for any such Case. But if such a Case is, or should be, (in my humble Opinion) it is the Duty of a People, under such Circumstances, to wait upon and worship God, in such Duties of Religion as they may and ought to attend without a Pastor, and not to profane a sacred Institution, that they might enjoy special Ordinances ; which would be doing Evil that Good might come of it.

But then, there is another Case in which some plead a Sort of Necessity : It is this, There are not a few in the late tumultuous Seasons of Separation and Division, who say the standing Ministry is corrupt, dead, formal, conformed to the World, immoral, &c. And therefore, they must come out from among them, be separate, and set up the Ministry among themselves. To such as those I would say,

That Corruption in Principle, a dead Formality, Conformity to the World, and Immorality, are much to be lamented, in professing Christians of a private Character ; but much more so in those that sustain the sacred Character of Gospel Ministers. And indeed, Heresy and gross Immorality, will disqualify them for the sacred Function ; and a Separation from them may be justified, if they are not suspended ; which ought to be done. But then, is this the Case of all ? No, blessed be God, there is a goodly Number of orthodox, pious, zealous and judicious Ministers of Christ in the Land, even in this corrupt Age. And it is very evident, that those who make this Plea, to justify their sinful Separations, and impious Invasions of the ministerial Office, not only run into such wild Extravagancies as are a Reproach to Reason and human Nature ; but some of them into gross Immoralities. And it certainly concerns them, to consider how they shall be able to account to the Judge of all, for their unjustifiable Separations, and unscriptural Ordinations, when this Enquiry shall be made, By what Authority dost thou these Things ? And who gave thee this Authority ?

§ As it is indisputably evident, that the Apostles, as Ministers of Christ, sustained a two-fold Character, the one extraordinary, which was that of an Apostle in the Scripture Sense of that Office, and the other ordinary, namely, that of a Presbyter or Elder ; so it may be made sufficiently plain, by a Variety of Instances, that they acted in both these different Capacities, sometimes in the one, and sometimes in the other. One or two Instances in both Cases may be mentioned here. The first is that of *St. Peter*, who, in the Case of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, acting in the extraordinary Capacity of an Apostle, under the immediate Direction of the Holy Ghost, discovered their Sacrilegious Fact, and wretched Falshood, discerned the Wickedness of their Hearts, and, by the apostolical Rod, punished them

they sustained the Character of Elders or Presbyters : St. *Peter*, that eminent Apostle of the Circumcision, expressly calling himself so in his first Epistle, 5th Chap. at the Beginning ; and St. *John*, the favourite Disciple too, in his 2d and 3d Epistles. And it is more than probable, that they frequently acted in that Capacity. And if this was the Case of St. *Paul* in *Timothy's* Ordination, it was no more than a Presbyterian Ordination : For tho' St. *Paul* was an Apostle, yet his Hand, in the supposed Case, is to be considered as that of a Presbyter.

But the Gift of God, which *Timothy* received by the putting on of the Apostle's Hands, was (as I humbly conceive) something distinct from his Ordination : I say quite distinct from his Ordination ; which, according to the Prophecies that went before of him, || was performed by the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery. † But he received the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost, by the putting on of the Apostle's Hands ; and this I conclude, is the Gift intended in the last cited Text to *Timothy*. † And if this was the Case, (which is most probable) then St. *Paul* had no Hand at all in *Timothy's* Ordination, as an Ordainer. But the whole Solemnity was managed and performed by the Presbytery ; and so (strictly speaking) it was wholly a Presbyterian Ordination.

And accordingly, all the Ordinations we have an Account of in the New-Testament, were performed by Presbyters, or Men acting in that Character and Capacity. By such were *Paul* and *Barnabas* ordained, tho' extraordinary Ministers before, as I have already observed, *Act.* xiii. 1, 2, 3. § And as such they ordained others, *Act.* xiv. 23. By such was *Timothy* ordained, as is abundantly evident from what has been already said. Such were *Timothy* and *Titus*, and as such they were directed to ordain others ; See 2 *Tim.* ii. 2. *Tit.* i. 5.

Now

them with immediate Death, *Act.* v. 1.---10. Of the same Kind, tho' different in Degree, was the Punishment inflicted by St. *Paul* upon *Elymas* the Sorcerer, for perverting the right Ways of the Lord, *Act.* xiii. 8,---11. To which I may add, that the Apostles acted in their extraordinary Character, when they conferred the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghost, it being a Power and Honour peculiar to them, *Act.* viii. 14,---21. But then, at other Times, we find the Apostles acting in their ordinary Capacity, as Presbyters. This is clear in that famous Synod or Council, held at *Jerusalem*, to decide the Controversy that had risen in the Church of *Antioch*, concerning Circumcision, and the Observation of the ceremonial Law : Of which we have an Account, *Act.* xv. The Members of this Council, were the Apostles and Elders of the Church of *Jerusalem*, ver. 6. The Matter of Controversy (it seems) was largely debated in this Synod ; and to ripen Things for a Determination, we find sundry of the Apostles, first *Peter*, then *Paul* and *Barnabas*, after that *James*, reasoning upon the Case, and after that giving their Judgment, ver. 7,---20. Whereas, had they acted in their extraordinary Character, they might, as infallible Guides of the Church, have determined the Case by their apostolick Authority, under the immediate Direction of the Holy Ghost ; and added some extraordinary Confirmation of their Determination, if needful.

|| 1 *Tim.* i. 18. It seems there had been Prophecies before of *Timothy*, that he should be taken into the Ministry, and prove eminent in the sacred Calling ; and for this Reason, I conceive, the Gift of the Ministry is said to be given to him by Prophecy, with the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery. † 1 *Tim.* iv. 14. † 2 *Tim.* i. 6.

§ They were not Apostles nor Diocesan Bishops, but stated Ministers in the Church at *Antioch*, of equal Authority, tho' some, if not all of them, might be endued with extraordinary Gifts, in that Age of Miracles.

Now, from these Scripture Precedents, without the Addition of any more, it is evident, that the Right and Power of Ordination does belong to Presbyters as such; or to the ordinary standing Ministers of the Gospel; such as are called Pastors and Teachers, *Eph. iv. 11.* But most frequently described by the Character of Presbyters or Elders; † and sometimes called Bishops: * For the same Persons that are called Elders in one Place, are called Bishops in another; they being only two distinct Names or Characters for one and the same Officer, in the Church of Christ; as may be seen in *Act. xx. ver. 17,* compared with the 28th, *Tit. i. 5.* with the 7th, and elsewhere. †

And these are the Officers to whom the Right and Power of Ordination does belong, as I observ'd but just now.

And, indeed, it must belong to them, or to none. For altho' human and civil Constitutions have multiplied, and made a great Distinction of Officers, with which some Churches are burdened, if not corrupted; § and which the Holy Scriptures know nothing of: Yet, by divine Institution, there are no Officers in the New Testament Church, invested with the Powers of the Gospel Pastor, superior to Presbyters or Elders; nor have there been any since the apostolick Age. For the apostolick Office expired with the Persons of the Apostles; and they have no Successors in their extraordinary Character, as Apostles, but in their ordinary Capacity as Presbyters only.

This being a Point of no small Importance in the present Subject of Enquiry, deserves some particular Attention: And it might be argued, with a satisfying Degree of Clearness, from the Way and Manner in which the Apostles were sent forth upon their extraordinary Embassy, as Apostles; there having been none from that Time to this, that ever received the same Mission immediately from Christ, in that extraordinary Way and Manner as the Apostles did; of which we have an Account in *John xx. 21, 22.*

But lest I offend by too great a Degree of Prolivity, I shall wave this Argument here, and put the Evidence of the Point upon a Consideration of two extraordinary Qualifications,

† *1 Tim. v. 1, 17, 19. Act. xiv. 23. xv. 6. 1 Pet. v. 1. et alibi.* * *Pilip. i. 1. 1 Tim. iii. 1, 2.*

† As the Names of Bishop and Presbyter are promiscuously used in the New Testament, as descriptive of the Gospel Pastor and Teacher, or the ordinary standing Ministers of Christ; so from an Identity of Names, may be argued an Identity of Offices. Thus in *Act. xx.* St. Paul having sent to *Ephesus*, and called the Elders of that Church to *Miletas*, where he then was, *ver. 17.* gives them this Charge, *ver. 28. Take Heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the Flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you OVERSEERS (Bishops in the Original) to feed the Church of God, &c.* From which it is evident, that the Government of the Church of *Ephesus* was committed to a Plurality of Elders, or Presbytery, and not to a single Person, or Diocesan Bishop; and consequently, that Presbyters have a Power of Ordination, since the Powers of Ordination and Government go together. Yea, that they have a Right by Scripture to all those Powers which Christ has granted to any of his standing Ministers, by what Character soever they are described.

And the Apostle having (in *Tit. i. 5, 6.*) laid down some of the Qualifications of the Elders, whom he left *Titus* to ordain in every City or Church at *Crete*, gives this Reason (*ver. 7.*) for insisting on those Qualifications, *For a Bishop must be blameless, as the Steward of God, &c.* which would be no Reason at all, unless the Apostle intended the same Officer by the Bishop, *ver. 7.* as he did by the Elders, *ver. 5.* and invested with the same Powers; both of Ordination and Jurisdiction.

§ Archbishops, Diocesan Bishops, Deans, Chapters, Prebends, Archdeacons, Parsons, Vicars, Curates, &c.

Qualifications, essentially necessary to constitute an Apostle, in the Scripture Sense of that Character; which have long since ceased, and are not to be found among any Order of Men upon Earth.

One of which Qualifications, was a Sight of Jesus Christ, with the Eyes of the Body after his Resurrection: Not that all those who thus saw Christ were Apostles: * No, they must have an apostolick Mission, with other essential Qualifications belonging to an Apostle. But without this none could be Apostles, in the true Scripture Sense of that Character and Office. For one main Article of that Business, which the Apostles were sent forth upon, was to be Witnesses of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Important Facts, upon which the Truth, the Hopes, and the Comforts of our Holy Religion eminently depends! Now it being requisite that Witnesses should be able to testify to a Truth or Matter of Fact, from their own personal Knowledge; it was therefore one necessary Qualification of an Apostle, that he had seen Jesus after his Resurrection, that so he might be a good Evidence of his having declared himself to be the Son of God, with Power, by his Resurrection from the Dead. †

Hence, when the Vacancy in the College of the Apostles, made by the Treason of Judas, † was to be filled up, it was required as a necessary Qualification in the Person that should supply it, that he was one who had accompanied with the Apostles, all the Time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them; beginning from the Baptism of John, unto that same Day that he was taken up from them; that he might be a Witness with them of Christ's Resurrection: See *Act. i. 21, 22.*

Upon this Account, the Apostle Paul had an extraordinary Vision of Christ, after his Resurrection; not only in his Journey to *Damascus*, ‖ but when he was caught up into the third Heaven, § where we may suppose his Sight of Christ, was more immediate and full. And he, as a Witness of Christ's Resurrection, could say, last of all, *He was seen of me also, as one born (i. e. to the apostolick Office) out of due Time, 1 Cor. xv. 8.* And upon this Footing, challenged those that disputed his Apostleship, in such Language as this, *Am I not an Apostle? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? 1 Cor. ix. 1.*

Thus much for the present, of the first extraordinary Qualification of an Apostle, in his peculiar and distinguished Character.

Moreover, that the Apostles might be enabled to produce incontestible Credentials of their extraordinary Mission and Authority; another pre-requisite Qualification, was their being furnished with the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost, that so they might have Power to confirm the new and sublime Doctrines they should preach, and the surprising Facts they should declare by miraculous Operations and Effects.

That Branch therefore of their Commission, by which they acted in their extraordinary Character, as Apostles, seems to be the most plainly and fully expressed, by our Lord Redeemer, in the forecited *xxth. of John*, ver. 21. where, speaking to the Apostles, he said, *As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you.* For it follows, ver. 22. *And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said, receive ye the Holy Ghost.* ¶ Which must be meant of the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghost, and

* Christ was seen after his Resurrection, by many that were not Apostles, *Mat. xxviii. 9. 1 Cor. xx. 6. † Rom. i. 4. † Act. i. 25. ‖ Act. ix. 3, ---8. § 2 Cor. xii. 1, ---7.* And as St. Paul had an extraordinary Vision of Christ at both those Seasons, so he had an extraordinary Mission: See *Act. xxvi. 16, 17, 18.* correspondent to that *John xx. 21, 22.*

¶ In the strictest Sense (says Mr. Henry) this is a special Commission to the Apostles themselves, and the first Preachers of the Gospel; who (being endued with the

and not of his sanctifying Influences ; for they had received the Holy Ghost, as a Spirit of Sanctification before this : But now had a Specimen and Earnest of the more plentiful Effusions of the Holy Ghost, in his extraordinary Gifts and Powers after Christ's Ascension.

Accordingly, we find that they were not allowed to enter upon their extraordinary Ministry, until they had received those extraordinary Gifts, in a more plentiful and superabundant Measure. Our Blessed Lord, therefore, (a little before his Ascension) said unto them, *Behold, I send the Promise of my Father upon you : But tarry ye in the City of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with Power from on high ; as St. Luke informs us in the xxivth, Chap. of his Gospel, at the 49th Verse. And referring (I suppose) to the same Time, in Act. i. 4, 5. tells us, that He (Jesus being assembled with them (the Apostles whom he had chosen) commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the Promise of the Father, which, said he, ye have heard of me. For, John truly baptized with Water ; but ye shall be baptized with the holy Ghost, not many Days hence. * And then adds, ver. 8. Ye shall receive Power, after the holy Ghost is come upon you ; and ye shall be Witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost Part of the Earth.*

In Obedience, therefore, to their divine Master's Command, the Apostles waited in the City of Jerusalem, till the Day of Pentecost ; and then entered upon their publick Ministry, as may be seen in the Acts of the Apostles † ; being plentifully furnished with the miraculous Gifts of the holy Ghost ; such as are enumerated by St. Paul in 1 Cor. xii. 8, 9, 10. *For to one is given by the Spirit the Word of Wisdom ; to another the Word of Knowledge by the same Spirit ; to another Faith by the same Spirit ; to another the Gifts of Healing by the same Spirit ; to another the Working of Miracles ; to another Prophecy ; to another the Discerning of Spirits ; to another divers Kinds of Tongues ; to another the Interpretation of Tongues.*

Thus, I have set before you, two of the extraordinary, but yet essential Qualifications of an Apostle (considered in his proper and distinguishing Character) as appears from what has been said ; with this View, to show you that they, as Apostles, have no Successors in the Christian Church ; but that their apostolick Office being extraordinary was temporary, and expired with their Persons, as was observed before.

For, as it is not consistent with the Wisdom of God, to continue an extraordinary Office in the Church of which there is no special Occasion, so it is not agreeable to the good Pleasure of God's Will that any Person should be employed in such an Office, or indeed in any other, in the Church, who wants the essential Qualifications, respectively belonging thereunto. By Consequence there can be no just Claim made, by any, to a Succession in the apostolick Office, who are destitute of those extraordinary but essential apostolick Qualifications, that have been under Consideration,

the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost) could distinguish who were in the Gall of Bitterness and Bond of Iniquity, and who were not. By Virtue of this Power, Peter struck *Ananias* and *Sapphira* dead, and *Paul* struck *Elymas* blind.

* As the Promise of the Messiah's coming in the Flesh, was the great Promise of the Old Testament : So the Promise of the holy Ghost, in a greater Measure of his extraordinary as well as sanctifying Influences than had been known before, is the great Promise of the New. And as the Spirit comes from the Father in the Name and by the Mediation of the Son, so Christ had frequently put his Disciples in Mind of this Blessing as the Promise of the Father, *John* xiv. 12, 16, 17, 26. xv. 26. xvi. 7, --- 14. therein referring to such Promises of the Father as those, *Isa.* xlv. 3. *Joel* ii. 28, --- 30. confirmed by the Prediction and Testimony of *John Baptist* with Reference to Christ, *Mat.* iii. 11. and by St. *Peter*, *Act.* ii. 33. † *Act.* ii.

deration, § whoever therefore puts in a Claim to such a Succession, is but a Pretender; boasting of a false Gift, like Clouds and Wind without Rain, unless he can justify the Claim, by being able, with Truth, to declare, that he has seen Christ since his Resurrection, as the Apostles did;---that he has the Gift of Tongues, Healing, working Miracles, &c. But where are the Men that can justify a Pretence to any of these Extraordinaries? Hence (I think) it appears evident, beyond any rational Dispute, that a Succession to the Apostles, in their extraordinary Character has long since ceased; or to speak more properly, there never was in Reality any such Succession, in an ordinary Way. ¶

But, altho' the the Apostles have no Successors, in their extraordinary Character, as Apostles, yet all the true Ministers of Christ are Successors to them in their ordinary Capacity, as Presbyters, or Gospel Pastors. And, upon their Ordination are invested with the same, yea, and all the Powers granted to the Apostles, as ordinary Ministers of Christ, by his Commission, in *Mat. xxviii.* which he introduces with this Preface, *ver. 18. All Power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth.* And then follows the Commission, *ver. 19, 20.* in these Words, *Goye therefore and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all Things whatsoever I have commanded you.*

I have had Occasion, more than once, to mention that divine Mission, by Virtue of which the Apostles acted in their extraordinary Character, as is recorded in
John

§ There was undoubtedly Occasion for those extraordinary Gifts and miraculous Powers, wherewith the Apostles and first Ministers of Religion, under the Gospel, were furnished in that Age; they being necessary to quality and fit them for the important Service of erecting and building up the Christian Church, in the tender Age and critical Period of an infant State, when violently opposed by the united Force of *Jews and Pagans*; and the Mind of Christ, with respect to his Church was not, as yet, fully made known. But when the Canon of Scripture was completed, the Doctrines of the Gospel sufficiently attested by Miracles, and the Christian Religion established in the World, there was no further need of continuing those extraordinary Gifts and Powers. It was therefore the Will of God, according to the Dictates of his infinite Wisdom, to withdraw them. And as it is probable that the superior Authority, which the Apostles exercised over other Ministers of the Gospel in their Day, was founded, if not wholly, yet more, in those extraordinary Gifts of Infallibility, discerning Spirits, and other miraculous Powers wherewith they were furnished, than in any special Superiority inherient in their Office, or coming from any other Quarter; so those extraordinary Gifts ceasing, that Superiority of Power ceases too. And it is a vain Thing for any to pretend to a Succession to the Apostles, in their extraordinary Character, who are destitute of those extraordinary Gifts and Powers.

¶ It is true *Matthias* did, in a Sense, succeed *Judas* in the Apostolate, inasmuch as he took Part of the Ministry and Apostleship, from which *Judas* by Transgression fell, *Act. i. 25.* But then as *Matthias* was qualified to be a Witness of Christ's Resurrection, having accompanied with the Brethren and Apostles all the Time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, *Ver. 21, 22.* so he was chosen by Lot, (a divine Determination) and not ordained by the Imposition of Men's Hands, but by the holy Ghost, as they all were not many Days after, *Ver. 23, 24, 26.* compare *Act. ii. 1, --- 4.* Thus the Number of the Twelve was made up; as afterwards when *James*, another of the Apostles was martyr'd, *Act. xii. 2.* *Paul* was made an Apostle, not by human, but divine Ordination, in a very extraordinary Way, of which he gives us an Account, *Act. xxvi. 15, --- 18,* and therefore calls himself an Apostle, *not of Men, neither by Man, but by Jesus and God the Father, who raised him from the Dead, Gal. i. 1.*

John xx. 21, 22. Which Mission they received from our Lord Redeemer, the Night after his Resurrection. But the Commission just now recited, it seems, was given some Time after this, probably but a little before Christ's Ascension into Heaven †, it being the Magna Charta of all ministerial Power, in his Gospel Church. Indeed, as it was primarily given, and personally directed to the Apostles, 40, there seems to be something in it peculiar to them, as they had the World for their Diocess, and all Nations committed to them as their Cure ‡ : Whereas upon the Introduction and Settlement of Christianity in a Country, or Land, it appears to be agreeable to the Gospel Constitution, that particular Pastors should be set over particular Churches therein erected upon the Gospel Plan, as their special Charge. * Nevertheless, inasmuch as there are many Nations in the World Strangers to the Gospel, and even in Christian Countries there may be, as there are at this Day, many Churches and Congregations destitute of fixt Pastors, I can see no Inconsistency with the Gospel Constitution in ordaining Ministers at large, and sending them forth to disciple Heathen Nations ; or to preach the Gospel, even

† *St. Paul*, in *1 Cor. xv. 5,--8.* reckons up five several Appearances of Christ after his Resurrection, besides that to himself after his Ascension. The first was to *Cephas* or *Peter*, then to the Twelve, called so, tho' *Judas* was no longer among them, because this was their first constituted and usual Number : Then to five hundred Brethren at once. After that he was seen of *James* singly, and then of all the Apostles, to whom he appeared more than once. Now it is evident they received their extraordinary Mission, recorded in *John xx. 21, 22.* the Night after Christ's Resurrection, *Luke xxiv. 33,--36.* compare *John xx. 19,--21.* But I think it is more than probable, that the grand Commission in *Mat. xxviii. 19, 20.* was not given till some Time after this : For it was given to the Eleven together, *Mat. xxviii. 16,--20.* But *Thomas* was not present, at the first Interview, and when his Brethren gave him an Account of his Appearance to them the Night after his Resurrection, he would not receive it for Truth, being under the Power of Unbelief, as to the important Fact of Christ's Resurrection, *John xx. 24, 25.* And therefore, eight Days after this, Christ appears to his Disciples again, *Thomas* being with them ; and gives him the most sensible Proofs of his Resurrection, ver. 26, 27. After this Interview, Christ discovered himself to *Peter* and sundry other Apostles at the Sea of *Tiberias*, *John xxi. 1,--14.* This was the third Time that Jesus shewed himself to his Disciples after that he was risen from the Dead. After this he appeared to the whole Body of his Disciples at the Mountain, where he had appointed them to meet him in *Galilee*, *Mat. xxviii. 16. Mark xvi. 7.* And, after this he met them several Times at *Jerusalem*, and discoursed with them concerning the Affairs of his Kingdom, *A. i. 1,--8.* And last of all, he was seen of them on Mount *Olivet* : But while they beheld, he was taken up, and a bright Cloud received him out of their Sight, *A. i. 9,--12. Luke xxiv. 50, 51.* Now I think there is good Ground to conclude, that at some of these last Seasons of Christ's Appearance, and conversing with his Disciples, a little, if not immediately before his Ascension, he charged them with this grand Commission, which from hence appears to be the standing Basis of all ministerial Power in the Church ; whereas the former, in *John xx. 21, 22.* was temporary and peculiar to the Apostles.

‡ But this has nothing in it peculiar to them, unless it be the Extensiveness of their Charge, being sent through the World to preach the Gospel to every Creature, *Mark xvi. 15.* or to disciple all Nations, *Mat. xxviii. 19.* For in all other Respects, it belongs to all the ordinary standing Ministers of Christ in all the successive Ages of the Church ; and there may be Cases in which the ordinary Ministers of the Gospel have a just and loud Call to disciple the ungodpelled Nations of the World. * *Tit. i. 5.*

even in a Christian Country, and do the Work of an Evangelist § in supplying destitute Churches and Congregations, as there shall be Occasion. For, emergent Circumstances may be a just Ground of varying from the general Rules of any Constitution.

But whatever circumstantial Variations, in such like Matters of Liberty may be made by christian and ministerial Prudence, which is profitable to direct : Yet the Commission under Consideration, being the grand Basis of all ministerial Power in the Church, therefore as the Apostles did, so all their Successors do receive their Office-Power and Authority from Christ by this Grant ; as is apparent from the Promise annexed to this Commission, by our divine Master, in these Words, *And lo I am with you alway, even unto the End of the World, Amen.* * A plain Evidence that this Commission was not given only to the Apostles personally considered ; because they are long since dead. And therefore, since (as I have shown you) they have no Successors in their extraordinary Character, as Apostles, it must belong to their Successors in their ordinary Capacity as Elders or Presbyters ; that is, to the ordinary standing Ministers of the Gospel who receive their Office-Power and Authority, from Christ by this Commission.

And indeed they must receive their Power from Christ by this Commission, or by none at all ; for there is no other divine Constitution in this Case provided by him, who is the only supreme Head, King, Lord and Lawgiver of the Church.

Now if this, which is the only standing Commission, belongs to Presbyters, or the ordinary standing Ministers of the Gospel (as it evidently does) then it must belong to them in the full Extent of it, unless Christ has limited it, and given all the Powers to some, and Part only to others. But no such Limitation or Division is to be found in the holy Scriptures of the New-Testament, wherein Christ has given us the Pattern and Orders of his House. And if Jesus Christ, to whom all Power is given in Heaven and in Earth, § has not made any such Limitation or Division of the Powers granted in his Commission, then certainly no Man, or Order of Men under Heaven have a Right to do it, unless Christ has given them this limiting and dividing Power. But no such Grant of a limiting and dividing Power made to any Man, or Order of Men, is to be found in the holy Bible. Consequently all the ordinary Powers granted by this Commission, must belong to Presbyters, as such, or to the ordinary standing Ministers of the Gospel, invested with the pastoral Office.

And accordingly, if every true Minister of the Gospel has all the Powers granted by Christ's Commission to the Apostles, considered in their ordinary Character as Presbyters, then certainly they have the Power of Ordination committed to them ; because Ordination belongs to the ministerial Power, as an inseparable Branch of it.

And indeed they either have all the Powers granted by Christ's Commission under Consideration, or they have none of those Powers. If the former, then they have no Superiors under Christ in the ministerial Office ; and so cannot be exempted or bared from exercising any Part or Branch of the ministerial Power. If the latter, then they have no ministerial Authority at all, but only an empty Title, without the least Branch or Degree of Office-Power ; which is an Absurdity that can by no Means be admitted of. For a Commission from the supreme Head, or Source of Power, always derives Authority with it, peculiar to the Office wherewith any one is invested by it : Yea, all the Branches of Power belonging to that Office. ¶

Therefore,

§ 2 Tim. iv. 5. * Mat. xxviii. 20. § Ver. 18.

¶ As it is evident beyond any rational Controversy, that Presbyters receive their ministerial Power from Christ by that Commission, *Mat. xxviii. 19, 20.* given primarily

Therefore, either Presbyters have no Power to baptize and administer the Lord's Supper, or they have Power to ordain. For as the Power of an Officer is derived from the proper Source of Power, by that Commission which impowers him to discharge the Duties of his Office, and can come in no other Way, nor from any other Quarter; so the Powers granted, by Christ's Commission, to all the true Ministers of the Gospel, are full, undivided, and may not be curtail'd or abridged.

Hear then the Conclusion of the whole Matter: If Presbyters, or the standing ordinary Ministers of the Gospel, have not a Right and Power to ordain others to the Work of the Ministry, none have: For as there is no standing Order of Ministers in the Church of Christ, superior to Presbyters by divine Institution; so there is but one undivided Commission, by which all the Ministers of the Gospel are impowered to act in the Discharge of their Office. And if none have Power to ordain, (which appears to be the Consequence of denying this Power to Presbyters) then the Ministry of Reconciliation must sink and cease under the New Testament: Nay, it would long since, have terminated and come to an End. But as it has been continued thro' past Ages, ever since the Death of the Apostles, and their immediate Successors, by a Succession to them, not in their Apostolick but Presbyterian Character; so the great Head of the Church, (*who holds the Stars in his Right Hand, and walks in the Midst of his golden Candlesticks,* §) has assured us that it shall continue to the End of the World. †

And therefore, as we are persuaded, on the one Hand, by such Reasons as have been assigned, that the Right and Power of Ordination does not belong to Laymen; so on the other, we are satisfied by such Scripture Arguments as have been offered, that we, who as Presbyters have the sacred Trust of the Gospel Ministry committed to us, are invested with a Right; and when duly called to that solemn Service, are in Duty bound to commit the same, by Ordination, to faithful Men, who shall be able to teach others also. † And may in this, as well as other Instances of our Ministrations, rely upon that gracious Word of Promise, upon which our divine Master has caused his Servants to hope: † *Lo I am with you alway, even unto the End of the World, AMEN.* §

Accordingly a Number of us, sustaining the sacred Character, being called to attend the Solemnities of an Ordination this Day, we (with a Dependence upon the gracious Presence of the glorious Head of the Church) purpose to proceed to that solemn Service, in case no Barr shall appear to be in the Way, when the proper public Preliminaries shall have been attended. N. B.

marily to the Apostles, considered principally in their ordinary Character of Presbyters;---a Character they seem to take Pleasure in distinguishing themselves by, as tho' it were on purpose to anticipate all Pretences to Preheminence among the Ministers of the Gospel, by Virtue of a Succession to them: So there is nothing more evident, than that the same Commission must give the same Powers to 'all that are truly authorized by it; and consequently, that both the Apostles, in their ordinary Capacity, and all other Gospel Pastors, must be, in all Respects, co-ordinate; and a'l of them vested with all and the same Powers, since they are all of them authorized by the very same Commission, if they have any Power at all, as Ministers of Christ.

I cannot therefore see how a Subordination, as to Order and an Imparity of Power, among those invested with the Office of the Gospel Pastor, can be established upon any Scripture Foundation, or defended by any plausible Arguments, from the New-Testament. I think our blessed Saviour condemns it, *Luk. xxii. 25, 26, 27.* And it seems to be derived rather from the Spirit of *Diotrephes*, than from the Instructions of Christ or his Apostles.

§ *Rev. ii. 1.* † *Mat. xxviii. 20.*

† *Ths. ii. 4.* 2 *Tim. ii. 2* † *Psal. cxix. 47.* § *Mat. xxviii. 20;*

N. B. These Preliminaries having been attended, and no Barr appearing to be in the Way, the Ordination was then solemnized by Prayer, with the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery, as usual. The Day being ordered to be kept as a Day of religious Fasting.

THE
C H A R G E,


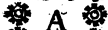


GIVEN TO

The Rev. BENJAMIN TALLMADGE,

UPON HIS

O R D I N A T I O N.

Dear BROTHER,





 S. Paul and Barnabas, when called to the Ministry of the Gentiles, were by the Presbyters in the Church of Antioch, separated to that special Service, by Fasting, Prayer, and the laying on of Hands, tho' extraordinary Ministers before; and Timothy, a Person of early Piety, and a young Minister of eminent Zeal in the Cause of Christ, according to the Prophecies which went before of him; received the Gift and Office of the Ministry, by the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery: So with the like Solemnities of Devotion, you have at this Time, been separated to the special Service of God and his People, in the Gospel of his dear Son, by the laying on of the Hands of this Presbytery. And being now regularly introduced into the sacred Inclosure of the Gospel Ministry, and invested with all the Office-Powers and Authority of the Gospel Pastor and Teacher, we are, in the next Place, to address a solemn Charge to you, in the Name of the Lord. And surely, it concerns you to attend to it, not as a formal Address from a Number of your Fellow-Servants, frail sinful Men! but as the CHARGE of the Great God, and his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

For, as God the Father is the Fountain of all Dominion and Power, so he hath seen fit to put the Scepter of universal Government into the Hands of his dear Son; considered as God-Man, or Mediator; and to constitute, make, and ordain him Head over all Things to the Church. Hence, although it is by us that you have been introduced into the Ministry at this Time, and you now have the Dispensation of the glorious Gospel, as a sacred Depositum, committed to your Trust, by Virtue of your Inauguration, which we have solemnly attended, according to Scripturè Precedents, and divine Institution: Yet, your ministerial Power and Authority is not from us, but from him, to whom all Power in Heaven and Earth is given, and all Judgment committed by God the Father. And he being both Lord and Christ, to him you must, e'er it be long, give an Account of your Stewardship.

Take Heed therefore unto the Ministry which you have received in the Lord, to fulfil it; remembering that solemn Admonition of our blessed Lord and divine Master, recorded in the Gospel; and now speaking to you in such Language as this, *No Man having put his Hand to the Plough, and looking back is fit for the Kingdom of God.*

The Work which you have now undertaken, is not only a good, but an exceeding great Work; it being even of infinite Moment and Consequence. For the care not of the mortal Bodies, and temporal Interests of dying Men, but that of their precious and immortal Souls, with Reference to a never-ending Eternity, is now devolved upon you. And, O! with what Weight should this bear upon your Mind, and abide upon your Conscience!

And, as your Work is great, so your Charge is very extensive, being invested with a Power to exercise the Gift which is in you, and which has been given you, by the Laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery, wheresoever you shall be regularly called to it. As a Token of which, I now put into your Hands, this blessed Book, the holy Bible, * containing not only sacred Histories, Prophecies and Types; but Christ's Commission to his Ministers, the Charter of the Churches Privileges, and her Laws of Government; the Doctrines of Faith once delivered to the Saints, the sacred Rites of instituted Worship, and the most excellent System of Christian Morality: Which, according to their Nature, Quality and Degree of Importance, and your own and People's correspondent State and Circumstances, must be the main Subjects of your Preaching, and Rules of your christian and ministerial Conduct.

But although your Charge is very extensive, and your Ministry not confined to this Place, yet your stated Labours (at least for the Present) are limited to the special Service of the Presbyterian Church and Congregation of the Lord, in this Town of *Brook-Haven*; and the Souls of which we commit to your special Pastoral Watch, Over-sight, and Charge, so long as it shall appear to be for the Glory of God, and the Good of his Church, to continue you in the Ministry here: And such Provision for your Subsistence as to Temporals, shall be made, as to render you capable of attending upon the Lord, in your great Work, without Distraction from worldly Cares and Avocations.

And as you watch for Souls, as one that must give an Account, so remember that the Soul of the meanest and most contemptible Slave, is of more value than all the material and visible World.

How dreadful an Account then will you have to give in the great Audit-Day, if any should perish through your careless Neglect, or allow'd Misconduct; the Guilt of the Blood of Souls being laid to your Charge! And you exposed at the tremendous Barr of the incarnate God, and universal Judge, to that awful Reprimand, *Thou wicked and slothful Servant!* What can be expected, under such dreadful Circumstances of crimson Guilt, but the amazing Execution of that Soul-rending Sentence, *Cast ye the unprofitable Servant into outer Darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth!*

But on the other Hand, how comfortable, how refreshing and joyful will your Account be, if, as a faithful Servant and wise Steward, you improve all your Talents to the best Purposes; and give to every one their Portion of Meat, in due Season? Surely, blessed shall that Servant be, whom his Lord, when he cometh shall find so doing: For he shall find Acceptance, and be favoured with the Approbation of his blessed Master, in such Language of Love and divine Grace as this, *Well done good and faithful Servant, enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.*

Have

* The Bible delivered to the Candidate ordained, &c.

Have you then any due Sense of the Weight, and vast Importance of your great Work ; any Regard to the Honour of Christ, who has committed unto you the Ministry of Reconciliation ; any Compassion for the Souls of perishing Sinners, and Desire of the Edification of Saints ; any Dread of the Wrath of the Lamb, and Desire of appearing with Comfort at the awful Barr of your great Judge, where your Fidelity in the Ministry will have a most strict and impartial Trial, before an assembled World of Angels and Men ! It certainly concerns you to address yourself to your solemn Work with great Seriousness, and to pursue it with the closest Application, assiduous Labours, ardent Zeal, unwearied Dilligence and inviolable Fidelity.

As, therefore, our Hearts Desire, and Prayer to God, for you has been, is, and (by divine Grace) shall be this, That you might come to the Churches of Christ, and to perishing Sinners, wherever you shall be called to labour ; and in particular, to this Church and Congregation of the Lord ; in the Fulness of the Blessing of the Gospel of Christ : So let it be your constant Study and Endeavour, (as an Instrument in God's Hand) to impart to them spiritual Gifts, to the End they may be established. And in all Things, behave yourself in the House of God, as becometh a Minister of Christ, and faithful Steward of the Mysteries of God.

Take Heed therefore, take Heed unto yourself, and to all the Flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you an Overseer, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own Blood ; taking the Oversight thereof, not by Constraint, but willingly ; not for filthy Lucre, but of a ready Mind ; not lording it over God's Heritage, as though you had a Dominion over their Faith, but as being an Ensamble unto the Flock, and an Helper of their Joy.

And since Necessity is now laid upon you woe unto you, if you do not preach the Gospel ; a Dispensation thereof being committed unto you. And look to it ; that the Gospel you dispense, be the pure Gospel of Christ : Not adulterated by Philosophy and vain Deceit, the carnal Reasonings, and unscriptural Impositions of Men of corrupt Minds, who teach for Doctrines the Commendments of Men ; which Things may have a Shew of Wisdom in Will-Worship, though vain in the Sight of God : But let it be the sincere Milk of the Word, and the pure spiritual Food of divine Ordinances, that Men may grow thereby.

We charge you therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge both 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 ; neglect not the Gift which is in you, and which has been given to you by solemn Prayer, with the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery ; but give Attendance to Reading, to Exhortation, to Doctrine : Meditate upon these Things ; give thyself wholly to them, that thy Profiting may appear to all. . . Hold fast the faithful Word as you have been taught, even that Form of sound Words which you have learned from the Holy Scriptures, in Faith and Love, which is in Christ Jesus : That you may be a Teacher of others in Faith and Verity ; and be able, by sound Doctrine, both to exhort and convince the Gainfayers. And let the Doctrine you preach be always wholesome Words ; agreeable to the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Doctrine which is according to Godliness ; therein shewing Uncorruptness, Gravity, Sincerity, sound Speech that cannot be condemned, that he that is of the contrary Part may be ashamed, having no Evil to say of you.

And being allowed of God to be put in Trust with the Gospel, so speak not as pleasing the vain Fancies and carnal Humours of Men, but God, who searcheth the Heart and trieth the Reins. Use not flattering Words, nor a Cloak of Covetousness ;
neither

neither shun to declare to them the whole Counsel of God. Keep back nothing from them that may be profitable to them; but teach them publicly, and from House to House, (as there shall be Occasion, and you shall be able) testifying unto all, Repentance toward God, and Faith to our Lord Jesus Christ. And let your Exhortations be not of Deceit, nor of Uncleanness, nor in Guile. Indure Hardness as a good Soldier of Jesus Christ, and keep yourself pure from the Blood of all Men.

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a Workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth; and as a faithful and wise Steward, give to every One their Portion of Meat in due Season.

Be wise even as a Serpent, but harmless as a Dove: And labour with all possible Prudence and Fidelity, to make a Distinction between the Clean and the Unclean, the Precious and the Vile. Give not that which is holy unto Dogs, neither cast your Pearls before Swine: But let the Members of Christ's Family, who are of Age, and have their Senses exercised to discern spiritual Things, be fed and feasted with that Bread and that Cup which is the Communion of the Body and Blood of our dear Lord. And be not only ready to baptize adult Persons, who have lived without that Seal of the Righteousness of Faith, upon their making a suitable Profession of Repentance toward God, and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ; but let the Lambs of his Flock be solemnly washed in the Laver of Christian Baptism, as is fit: And then, as becomes a Pastor of Christ's Flock, take Care that they be trained up, as the Disciples of the compassionate Shepherd of *Israel*, who gathers the Lambs with his Arms, carries them in his Bosom, and gently leads those that are with Young. If thou lovest Christ, feed his Sheep, and if thou lovest Christ feed his Lambs. And for this Purpose, Precept must be upon Precept, Precept upon Precept, Line upon Line, Line upon Line; here a little, and there a little; that thou mayest teach them Knowledge, and make them to understand Doctrine, who are weaned from the Milk, and drawn from the Breasts.

Be bold, even as a Lion, in the Cause of God, though meek as a Lamb in your own: And labour with an holy Fortitude and unshaken Resolution, as becomes an Embassador of the King of Kings, to maintain the Honour of Christ's Authority, as the great Lawgiver of the Church, by a regular Government of his House, which is the Church of the living God: For unto you are committed the Keys not only of Doctrine but of Discipline. Whatsoever therefore you shall bind on Earth, (according to the Laws of Christ's Kingdom) shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on Earth (by the same Rules) shall be loosed in Heaven. But take Heed and use this Power, which is given you for Edification and not for Destruction.

Warn the Unruly, that they turn from their evil Ways and live. Comfort the Feeble-minded; support the Weak: Be patient towards all Men; in Meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God, peradventure, will give them Repentance, to the acknowledging of the Truth, that they may recover themselves out of the Snare of the Devil, who are taken Captive by him at his Will. On some have Compassion, making a Difference, (according to their Tempers and Circumstances.) Others save with Fear, pulling them out of the Fire. Them that sin before all, rebuke before all, that others also may hear and fear, and do no more so wickedly. And those that duly express and evidence their Repentance, restore in the Spirit of Meekness: Let that which is lame be turned out of the Way.

We charge you before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect Angels, that you observe these Things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by Partiality.

Give

Give yourself also continually to Prayer, as well as to the Ministry of the Word and Ordmances of the Lord's House; considering your own Insufficiency, not being able of yourself to think any Thing that is good as of yourself, much less to perform the great Duties of the evangelical Ministry: But your Sufficiency is of God, who can make you able Minister of the New Testament, not of the Letter, but of the Spirit. As it is good and acceptable in the Sight of God our Saviour, that Supplications, Prayers, and Intercessions should be made for all Men, so it is your Duty and Interest to be much in Prayer, especially for the Church of God; that his Kingdom might come, and that you yourself might be made an happy Instrument of promoting the Interest not only of his visible, but especially of his spiritual Kingdom among Men. Pray therefore for yourself, and pray for the Flock: Pray over your Studies, and pray over your Labours; remembering that Success depends intirely upon the divine Blessing. For, neither is he that planteth any Thing, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the Increase. For he that planteth, and he that watereth are one; and every Man shall receive his own Reward, according to his own Labour. How full then will your Joy be, and how bright and weighty your Crown of Rejoicing, in the Presence of the Lord Jesus at his coming, if being found faithful, you shall also be successful in winning Souls to Christ? But if you make full Proof of your Ministry, waiting upon God by fervent persevering Prayer for Success, though you should labour in vain, and spend your Strength for nought; yet surely your Judgment shall be with the Lord, and your Work with your God. Yea, though *Israel* should not be gathered, yet, if in Christ, thou shalt be glorious in the Eyes of the Lord, and thy God shall be thy Strength.

But be admonished and quickened to take Heed unto yourself, as well as to your Doctrine and the Duties of your Ministry. And whilst you teach others, neglect not to teach and be instructed yourself. Content not yourself with Probabilities and Hopes, but make sure of a vital Union to Jesus Christ, the glorious Head of all divine and saving Influences; that you may be able, with an holy, humble Confidence, to say of yourself, as *St. Paul* once did of himself, *I knew a Man in Christ*: For how dreadful will the Case be, if after you have preached to others, you yourself should be a Castaway!

Nay, be zealous of spiritual Gifts and Graces; abide not in any of the lower Forms in the School of Christ, but with an holy Emulation labour to excel; that being taller by the Head and Shoulders than your Christian Brethren, you might be as a *Jacbin* and a *Boaz*, in the House of your God here below; and at last be eternally fix'd as a monumental Pillar of rich sovereign Grace, in the Temple of God above, and go no more out.

Look well likewise to your Conversation, that it be ordered aright in all Things; not only as becomes a Christian, but a Minister of the Gospel; who should be blameless, vigilant, sober, of good Behaviour, given to Hospitality; not given to Wine, no Striker, not greedy of filthy Lucre, but patient; not a Brawler, not covetous, but one that ruleth well his own House, having his Children in Subjection, with all Gravity.

Let your Speech be always seasoned with the Salt of Grace, and let no corrupt Communication proceed out of your Mouth, but that which is good to the Use of edifying; that it may minister Grace unto the Hearers, as well as manifest Grace in the Speaker.

Flee every Thing therefore that becometh not a Man of God and Minister of Christ; and follow after Righteousness, Godliness, Faith, Love, Patience, Meekness, and Peace, with them that call on the Lord out of pure Heart.

Let

Let no Man despise thee, but be thou an Example of the Believers, in Word, in Conversation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity, that thou mayest both save thyself, and them that shall hear thee.

And as thou art allowed of God to be put in Trust with the Gospel, the same sacred Trust commit thou to faithful Men, who shall be able to teach others also, as there shall be Occasion and Opportunity : But let it be with this Caution, *Lay Hands suddenly on no Man, neither be Partaker of other Men's Sins, keep thyself pure.*

And now having engaged in an holy Warfare, intangle not yourself with the Affairs of this Life, unless upon inevitable Necessity ; but as a good Soldier of Jesus Christ, fight the good Fight of Faith, lay Hold on eternal Life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good Profession before many Witnesses.

Finally, We give thee Charge in the Sight of God, who quickeneth all Things ; and before Christ Jesus, who before *Pontius Pilate* witnessed a good Confession, that thou keep this Commandment without Spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ ; which in his Times, he shall shew who is the blessed and on'y Potentate ; having on his Vesture, and on his Thigh a Name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS, to whom we must all give an Account of our Stewardship, when the Son of Man shall sit in the Throne of his Glory, and with him the Twelve Apostles, upon twelve Thrones, judging the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

O *Benjamin!* keep that which is committed to thy Trust, avoiding profane and vain Babblings, and Opposition of Science, falsely so called ; which some professing, have erred concerning the Faith, and made Shipwreck of a good Conscience.

Watch therefore in all Things, endure Afflictions, do the Work of an Evangelist, make full Proof of thy Ministry ; be willing to spend, and be spent in the Service of your divine Master, and the Souls of his dear People, so that you might finish your Course with Joy, and the Ministry you have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God.

Then may you, in the happy Close of a useful and exemplary Life, of Service and Suffering for Christ's Sake ; say, with an holy Serenity of Mind, *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 ; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing : For, if thou art faithful unto the Death, when the chief Shepherd shall appear, thou shall receive a Crown of Righteousness, Life and Glory that fadeth not away.*

In that solemn and glorious Day of Christ's appearing and Kingdom, *they that be wise shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament ; and they that turn many to Righteousness, as the Stars for ever and ever.*

Grace be with thee ; may the Lord Jesus Christ be with thy Spirit. AMEN.



9 JU 64

AN
EXHORTATION
TO
The PEOPLE;

Deliver'd at *Brook-Haven*, on *Long-Island*, *October 23, 1754.*

Consequent upon the

ORDINATION
OF

The Rev. Mr. BENJAMIN TALLMADGE.

By JAMES BROWN, A. M.
Pastor of the Church in *Bridghampton*, on *Long-Island*.

I. *Thef. v. 12, 13. And we beseech you Brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you.*

And esteem them very highly in Love for their Works Sake; and be at Peace among yourselves.

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An EXHORTATION, &c.

❀❀❀❀❀ I ❀❀❀❀❀ T cannot but be thought reasonable, that our Minds should be seriously affected with the solemn Transactions of this Day, which so immediately relate to the Dispensation of Grace by the Gospel : These Things naturally lead us to reflect upon our Duty, as Ministers or Hearers of the Word.

We have already, in the Sermon and Discourse deliver'd, and Solemnities of the Ordination now attended, had represented to our View, the weighty Trust, the solemn Charge and Duties incumbent on the Ministers of the Gospel. And these Things virtually teach, and silently suggest, sundry Duties that belong to the Hearers of the Word, which may be briefly touch'd upon with Propriety on this Occasion.

None of this numerous Audience should be as idle and unconcern'd Spectators ; but the Solemnities of this Day, demand the most serious Attention of this Church and Congregation especially ; to which I shall more particularly address myself. And it may not be improper, *My dear Brethern and Friends*, to remind you of past Dispensations of divine Providence towards you, in Respect of the Gospel Ministry and Ordinances among you. These Privileges have (I conclude with, in the Memory of many, if not the most of you) been interrupted, and for a Season removed, by the Death of one Minister after another, who have labour'd in the Gospel among you : Your late pious and worthy Pastor, † whose *Praise is still in the Churches*, † you enjoy'd but a few Years ; he was remov'd in the Midst of his Usefulness : His Death did undoubtedly cast a dark Gloom upon many Minds ; and by Means of that dark and awful Providence, you have for some Time, been destitute of the rated Ministry of the Word and Gospel Sacraments. We therefore now congratulate you, on the pleasing and happy Prospect you have of again enjoying those Privileges.

And though our Reverend and dear Brother, who is now set apart to the Service of Christ in the Gospel, is not ordained with such a particular Relation to you, as is common in Ordinations ; yet we are well satisfied, that (in thus setting him apart to the Work of the Ministry) we have done nothing inconsistent with the Nature and Design of this sacred Institution, and nothing but what is virtually implied in all Ordinations. Those that are ordained over particular Congregations, are not so confin'd and restricted, but that, when Providence and Duty direct, they ought to remove. The Opinion that has prevailed among many, that the Relation between a Minister and a particular Church, is as unviolable as the conjugal Relation, has no Foundation in Scripture and Reason : however, the Obligations to mutual Duties between a Minister and a People are not the less binding while they continue together in that Relation. And therefore we conclude concerning our *Dear Brother*, now set apart to the Work of the Gospel Ministry, that while he continues among you in that sacred Service, (as we hope and pray he may for a long Time ; Yea, if God in his Providence shall so order it, to the End of his Life,) the same mutual Duties are incumbent on him and you, as in all other Cases, between Minister and People. A few of those general Duties, on your Part, I would remind you

† *The Revd. Mr. David Youngs.* † *2 Corinths. viii. 18.*

of, though we would hope you are not ignorant of them ; yet it may not be amiss on this Occasion, to stir up your Minds to a fresh Remembrance.

In the first Place, as a necessary Foundation to those Duties, esteem a preach'd Gospel, and the Administration of Gospel-Ordinances and Sacraments, as most precious and valuable Blessings ; and remember that they are of divine Institution, the Means which infinite Wisdom has appointed, for the Recovery of an apostate and perishing World, and the *Salvation of them that believe*. When our blessed Redeemer had finish'd his Work here on Earth, he ascended on high, *far above all Heavens, and gave Gifts unto Men, Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers*, for the edifying and perfecting his *mystical Body*. * These Gifts and Blessings of our ascended Saviour should be highly esteemed : It is then a provoking Sin in the Sight of God, to treat the Gospel and Ordinances thereof as mean and contemptible, or to be *wearry of, and snuff at them* : This is a Sin severely animadverted upon by the inspired Prophet ; *Mal. i. 13.*

Again, you should receive him, who is now set apart to the Work of the Gospel-Ministry, as a *Messenger of the Lord of Hosts*, || and treat him with proper Esteem and Respect : Ministers of the Gospel come upon a most important Errand ; are sent to negotiate in Affairs of eternal Consequence, and to treat with Mankind in Matters of Life and Death ; to propose a Treaty of Peace between an offended Deity and guilty perishing Sinners ; to offer eternal Life and Salvation through Christ the Redeemer : They should therefore be received with Respect and Esteem, on the Account of their Office, and the weighty Message they bring. Consider *how beautiful are the Feet of them that preach the Gospel of Peace, and bring glad Tidings of good Things* : † And obey that apostolick Exhortation, *1 Thes. v. 12, 13. We beseech you Brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in Love for their Works Sake.*

It is your Duty to encourage, assist and comfort your Minister, by a kind, friendly, and christian Conduct towards him. Many are the Tryals and Temptations, anxious Cares and discouraging Difficulties, that attend those who are faithfully engag'd in the Work of the Ministry ; and if People (especially those to whom they minister) conduct towards them, in an unchristian Manner, it will greatly add to their Burden, depress their Spirits, and obtrude their Usefulness ; you should therefore endeavour to strengthen your Minister's Hands, and encourage his Heart, in his great and arduous Work ; by a christian and friendly Deportment towards him. Be always ready to vindicate his Character and good Name, when Occasion calls for it, against all unjust Reproaches, and malevolent Slanders. The best of Men are liable to the Abuse of evil Tongues, and to have all manner of Evil spoken against them falsely. Ministers of the Gospel are as much expos'd as any Men ; they are set as a Spectacle to the World, they are often made the Contempt and Scorn of a wicked World, being reproach'd by Men of corrupt Principles, and licentious Manners : You shou'd therefore defend them against all abusive Calumnies. Nothing that is sinful in a Gospel Minister, shou'd be justified or wink'd at ; Sin, in those of that sacred Order, appears more odious, and is a greater Hurt and Scandal to Religion, than in Men of a common Station ; and therefore their good Names are of great Importance : Common human Imperfections should be treated with much Candour and Moderation ; we are forbidden even to receive an Accusation against an Elder, but before two or three Witnesses. ‡

Again, you should encourage your Minister, by consulting and providing for his temporal Interest, his comfortable and decent Support in the World. It is a false and corrupt Principle, that has prevail'd among some, that they are not under Obligation to contribute any Thing to the Support of the Gospel Ministry ; it is indeed an Opinion, that suits the selfish and covetous Temper of carnal and worldly Men,

* *Eph. iv. 9, 12.* || *Mal. ii. 7.* † *Rom. x. 15.* ‡ *1 Tim. v. 19.*

Men, but directly repugnant to sundry plain Texts of holy Scripture. † But Brethren we hope better Things of you, though we thus speak; yea, you have made it manifest, by your Practice, that you are better principled. Though your Ability, as to Number and Opulence, is not equal to that of the Generality of Congregations; yet we hope you will persevere and continue to exert yourselves, as far as Reason and Duty require. Labour to be cheerfully unanimous, in bearing your equal Proportion, for the Support of the Gospel. If some will not do their Proportion, others must exceed; and if you act from a good Principle, it will be an acceptable Offering to God, and you shall not lose your Reward. It is highly reasonable, that those who stately labour among you in the Gospel, and sow to you spiritual Things, should reap of your carnal Things. A Gospel-Minister is obliged, by his Office, to give himself wholly to his Work; to devote the Substance of his Time to Reading, Meditation and Prayer, with other Duties of the Ministry; And a Bishop must be given to Hospitality. ‡ But how can he discharge these Duties, unless his People give him a comfortable and decent Support? The Nature of the Duty of a Gospel-Minister, teaches the Obligations his People are under, to provide for his comfortable Maintenance: This is not merely an Act of Charity, but what they are bound to, by the Law of God, and they who are delinquent, *rob God in Tythes and Offerings.* ||

It is your Duty to contribute to the Comfort and Encouragement of your Minister, by christian and friendly Visits. This is a Duty incumbent both on Ministers and People, but principally on the People; except in extraordinary and difficult Cases. If any be sick, let them send for the Elders of the Church. § It is a common Complaint, that Ministers are not frequent enough in their Visits, (and there may be too much Ground for the Complaint, but those who are most forward in complaining, are, in general, least desirous of ministerial Visits;) not considering, that it is their Duty chiefly to visit their Minister, and to converse freely with him about their spiritual Concerns: both Scripture and Reason teach this to be the Duty of a People; *For the Priest's Lips should keep Knowledge, and they should seek the Law at his Mouth.* ¶ And how much more convenient and easy is it, for an whole Congregation to visit their Minister, than for him to visit every particular Person? This would ordinarily take up such a great Part of his Time, as to interfere with other Duties; they who are seriously concern'd about the World to come, and desirous to converse about the everlasting Concerns of their Souls, will readily repair to their Minister, to whom they should freely communicate their spiritual Concerns; and this would be very grateful and acceptable to every faithful Minister, and would add fresh Life, Vigour, and Encouragement to him in his Labours: And those Visits should be ordinarily of this Kind, and with this View. While you remember, that it is your Duty, frequently to visit your Minister, you should take Care, that you don't burden him with unnecessary, tedious, and frivolous Visits; so as to cause him a fruitless Expence of his precious Time: His Calling and Office oblige him to be much in Study and Retirement, that he may fulfil the Ministry that he has receiv'd of the Lord, and exercise the Gift that is in him, and bring out of his Treasure Things new and old *: Your Visits then should be always with religious Views; either to get good, or to do good; to encourage and comfort your Minister, by manifesting your hearty Regard to Religion, in seeking his Help and Direction for the Good of your Souls; or to be helpful to him in his great Work, and in Things that are for his temporal Comfort and Support. How happy and beautiful would such a Temper and Practice be, if it generally prevail'd among People!

† 1 Corinth. ix. 6, --- 14. Gal. vi. 6, --- 8. 1 Tim. v. 17, 18. Luke x. 7. ‡ 1 Tim. iii. 2. || Mal. iii. 8. § James v. 14. ¶ Mal. ii. 7. * Col. i. 17, 17. 2 Tim. i. 6. Matb. xiii. 52.

People! but the great Backwardness, that many discover, to conversing freely about their Souls, manifests that they have no Desires or Notions of ministerial Visits, but for a meer Compliment.

Again, you shou'd remember your Minister in your Prayers. The Work of the Ministry, is an hard and difficult Work: How importunate then should you be at the Throne of Grace, that your Minister may have the Divine Presence and Assistance; that a Door of Utterance † and spiritual Freedom may be given him; that he may be enabled to preach the Word in *Demonstration of the Spirit and with Power*; ‡ and that his Labours may be accompanied with a Blessing, for the effectual and saving Benefit of many? The inspir'd Apostle expresses his Desire of the united Prayers of his Hearers, in the Language of an earnest Supplicant; *Now I beseech you, Brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's Sake, and for the Love of the Spirit, that ye strive together in your Prayers to God for me.* § And let me address and beseech you, in the Language of the same Apostle, *Brethren pray for us*; ¶ pray in your Families, and bow the Knee in secret before God, for us.

Again, I would charge and exhort you, that you give your constant, serious, and devout Attendance on the publick Worship of God, and submit to the Government and Discipline of his House; esteem it a Privilege, and rejoice when you have Opportunity, to go up to the House of God; *Let the Tabernacles of the Lord of Hosts be amiable, and the Gates of Zion beautiful* † in your Eyes; rejoice at the Approach and Return of every Sabbath, and all other convenient Opportunities of attending publick Worship, and hearing the Word; attend on the Ministry of the Word and Gospel-Ordinances, with serious and spiritual Devotion; submit to the Ministerial Instructions of your Pastor, as your spiritual Guide; *Obey them that have the Rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your Souls, as they that must give Account; that they may do it with Joy and not with Grief.* ¶ Submit to that spiritual Government, which Christ hath appointed in his Church; and seriously attend all Gospel-Dispensations and Ordinances: And when you hear the Words of God preach'd, take Heed how you hear; † hear it as the Word of God, and not as the Word of Men; * hear it with diligent Attention and Self-application; with an hearty Concern, that it may enlighten your Understandings, and affect your Hearts; so that it may be the Means of making you wiser and better: Take Heed, that you are not disturb'd or offended at the Word, because it strikes at your beloved Lusts, or contradicts and detects your favourite Principles and fond Opinions; but give yourselves Time, impartially and calmly, to examine what you hear; you are not obliged, to receive every Thing you hear from the Pulpit, with a blind and implicit Faith; but you should, like the noble Bereans, *receive the Word with all Readiness of Mind, and search the Scriptures daily, whether these Things are so*: † remember, it is at your Peril that you reject or dislike any Thing, that is agreeable to the Divine Word.

Again, I would recommend to you, and earnestly beseech you, to study the Things that tend to Peace; labour for Peace and Unanimity among yourselves; *maintain the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*; † study the Peace of the Church of Christ in general, and of this Church and Congregation (of which you are Members) in particular; *Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem, that Peace may be within her Walls, and Prosperity within her Palaces.* ¶ Shun and avoid all separate Principles and Practices. We can't but commend you, for the Peace and good Order you have maintain'd, during your broken and unsettled State. We would animate you, to persevere in the Faith and Order of the Gospel; abide by the

Footsteps

† *Coloss.* iv. 3. † *1 Corinth.* ii. 4. § *Rom.* xv. 30. ¶ *1 Thess.* v. 25. † *Psal.* lxxxiv. 1. ¶ *Heb.* xiii. 17. † *Luke.* viii. 18. * *1 Thess.* ii. 13. † *Acts* xvii. 11. † *Eph.* iv. 3. ¶ *Psal.* cxii. 7.

Footsteps of the Flock; || hearken to no Temptations that may lead you astray; give no Countenance to those pretended Preachers who attempt to break and destroy the Peace, and subvert the Ministry of the Generality of the Christian Churches in this Land. Whatever plausible Pretence they may make, of being sent by God, &c. or of extraordinary Sanctity and Purity; they are to be esteem'd and treated as *Wolves in Sheeps-cloathing*. § Let me adopt the Words of the inspir'd Apostle, as pertinent to the Purpose, *Rom. xvi. 17, 18. Now I beseech you, Brethren, mark them which cause Divisions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them; for they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own Belly; and by good Words and fair Speeches, deceive the Hearts of the Simple.* There is scarcely any one Thing, more frequently enjoin'd upon Christians in the New-Testament, than Peace and Unanimity; and scarcely any Thing so often forbidden, as Division, Strife, Emulation and Contention: *Therefore follow after the Things which make for Peace, and Things wherewith one may edify another.* ¶ And we beseech you, Brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem very highly in Love for their Works Sake, and be at Peace among yourselves. †

And now, as a weighty Motive to enforce these Exhortations, let me remind you, seriously to consider, that all our Thoughts and Actions have a Relation to a future Judgment; and that, especially our mutual Concerns, and the Duties that belong to us as Ministers and People, have a direct Relation to the Business of the last Day; *when God shall judge the Secrets of Men's Hearts by Jesus Christ.* † We must all appear at the Judgment-Seat of Christ: We, who sustain the Office of the Gospel-Ministry, must then give an Account of our Stewardship: * And you must be responsible for your Conduct; how you treat the Ministers of Christ, and what Reception you give to the Gospel of Peace, and how you improve the Day and Means of Grace.

Dear Brethren and Friends: Maintain in your Minds, a serious Sense of the Certainty of a future and approaching Judgment; and let this influence your Hearts and Practice, to the faithful Discharge of every Duty: And let me add, that you take Heed that you do not rest in the External of Religion; and content yourselves, because you attend a preach'd Gospel, and the Sacraments and Ordinances of the Christian Church. Remember that the Design and End of these Institutions are to lead you to Christ; without whose Righteousness, you cannot appear in Safety at his Judgment-Seat: Make it then your great and chief Concern, that the Means of Grace be savingly applied to you, so as to be a *Saviour of Life unto Life.*

Are there not many of you, who have no sufficient Reason to conclude, that the Means of Grace have been thus applied to you, for your thorough and saving Conversion? But you are yet in a State of Unregeneracy and Guilt. We pity you, and earnestly beseech you, to consider your Misery and Danger. What an awful Account will you have to render at the Day of Judgment, if you die in your Sins! How many solemn Warnings, and gracious Invitations have you had, by a preach'd Gospel! And shall all these be *Labour bestowed on you in vain* †? Must all these precious Opportunities, and gracious Dispensations rise up in Judgment against you, in the last Day; when Christ shall appear *in flaming Fire to take Vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel*? || Yea, I assure you, if you finally persist, in hardening your Hearts against Christ, and refusing a Compliance with the Gospel; all the Sermons you have ever heard from those that are now dead and gone, and from those that are now living, and all that you ever shall

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|| *Cant. i. 8.* § *Math. vii. 15.* ¶ *Rom. xiv. 19.* † *1 Thess. v. 12, 13.* † *Rom. ii. 16.* * *Luke xvi. 2.* † *Gal. iv. 11.* || *2 Thess. i. 8.*

hear; yea, all your Neglects of hearing, and attending the Means of Grace, and all the precious Opportunities and Privileges bestow'd upon you, shall rise up in Judgment against you, to your aggravated Condemnation: *And it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, in the Day of Judgment, than for you.* ¶ Therefore I exhort and beseech you, yea, I charge you, now to improve the Day and Means of Grace; embrace all Opportunities of attending the appointed Means of Salvation, and earnestly pray, that the Dispensations of the Gospel, may (by the concurrent Influences of the Holy Spirit) be made the happy Means of your thorough Conviction, and saving Conversion.

I would add a Word to you, who have had the happy Experience of the good Effect of the Gospel and its Ordinances, by the co-operating, supernatural, and saving Influence of the Divine Spirit in your Hearts, whereby you have been made willing in the Day of God's Power. § Surely you cannot but highly prize and esteem Gospel Dispensations, in which you have *beheld the Glory of God as in a Glass*, &c. ¶ Dear Brethren, while you thankfully remember God's distinguishing Grace and Mercy to you, be earnest in Prayer, that the same Blessings may be conferr'd on others; that the Gospel-Ministry among you, may be the Means of turning many to Righteousness; that your Minister may have many *Seals of his Ministry as Crowns of his Rejoicing in the Day of Christ*. † My Brethren, strive to grow in Grace; feed on the *sincere Milk of the Word*, † and Ordinances; labour to recommend Religion, by a *Conversation as becomes the Gospel*; † Strive to excel in Humility, Meekness, and Condescension, one to another; walk together as *Brethren and Companions in the Kingdom and Patience of Christ*. § Finally Brethren, *farewel, be perfect, be of good Comfort, be of good Mind, live in Peace, and the God of Love and Peace shall be with you.* ¶ AMEN.

¶ *Math. x. 15.* § *Psalms cx. 3.* ¶ *2 Corinths. iii. 18.* † *1 Thess. ii. 19.*
 † *1 Pet. ii. 2.* ¶ *Phil. i. 27.* § *Rev. i. 9.* ¶ *2 Corinths. xiii. 11.*

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