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DISCOURSES

AT THE

INAUGURATION

OF THE

REV. JAMES W. ALEXANDER, D.D.

AS PROFESSOR OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY AND CHURCH
GOVERNMENT IN THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
AT PRINCETON.

DELIVERED AT PRINCETON, NOVEMBER 20. 1849.

BEFORE THE DIRECTORS OF THE SEMINARY.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

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I.

THE SERMON;

BY THE REVEREND WILLIAM S. PLUMER, D. D., OF BALTIMORE.

II.

THE CHARGE;

BY THE REV. WILLIAM W. PHILLIPS, D. D., OF NEW-YORK.

III.

THE INAUGURAL DISCOURSE.

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The Authority, Duties, and Value of the Christian Ministry.

A CHARGE

TO THE PROFESSOR.

BY THE

REV. WM. W. PHILLIPS, D. D.,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE CITY OF NEW-YORK.

C H A R G E .

THE history of the past teaches us that the ministry of reconciliation has hitherto exerted—and the Bible warrants the assertion—that it is destined hereafter to exert a more important influence than any other agency. It must most deeply affect all the best interests of men, and is immediately connected with the highest glory of God. By it his moral perfections, and his counsels concerning the vocation, sanctification and glorification of his people are to be made known. For He has been pleased to ordain that the exercise of this office should be the means of saving them that believe; of preserving and edifying the Church until her complete and final triumph shall have been achieved, and all the ransomed of the Lord shall have been gathered into his fold. He has therefore adapted it to perform its great, powerful, and glorious work.

I. In the first place, those who exercise it are clothed with DIVINE AUTHORITY. They are to be a distinct order of men, set apart for the work. The names and titles by which they are distinguished are all significant of the nature and design of their office, and cannot be applied to believers indiscriminately. Their qualifications are mentioned, their peculiar duties are enumerated, and the manner of their induction into office is pointed out in the word of God. All are not permitted to assume the office of the ministry whenever they may feel themselves to be self-moved thereto, or whenever they may choose to take the honour of it to themselves; but those only who are called to it of God, and are regularly appointed. When our Lord ascended up on high he gave gifts to men; some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Eph. iv. 11-13. It is true, the apostles were extraordinary officers, ordained immediately by our Lord Jesus Christ, to perform a special work which needed not to be repeated; and it was essential that those who acted as apostles should have seen the Lord, so that they could not as such have any successors; yet as there never has been and never can be a church-state

without a ministry, and as the same necessity which required the appointment at first still exists and will continue to exist until the end of time, the office of an ordinary ministry must be perpetual. We accordingly find in the Scriptures that the apostles ordained presbyters and elders in every church, and commanded them to ordain others; enjoining it upon the churches to obey them in their official capacity.

The promise of the Saviour, annexed to the words of its institution, implies that it was to be continued in the Church and to be clothed with the same authority: "Go ye into all the world 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; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Those whom the Saviour then addressed did not continue in the body until the end of the world; they served the Church during their generation, and went to their reward; but their office must continue, and those who exercise it lawfully have the same authority and an interest in the same promise. As it was said of the Saviour, "that he taught not as the Scribes, but as one having authority;" so may it be said in a subordinate sense of those who come in his name. He has commissioned them, saying, "As my Father hath sent me, so send I you; he that receiveth you receiveth me." He has authorized them to say, "Now

then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us ; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

II. The NATURE OF THEIR MESSAGE and of their work is in itself, as well as by divine appointment, adapted to produce the most important results. They make known, ministerially, the one only living and true God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. They communicate that knowledge which lies at the foundation of all true religion, the knowledge of the only legitimate object of worship and of his mind and will. Him, whom all nature adores, whom all his works praise, whom the human mind, blinded by sin, seeks after and ignorantly worships, they declare ; even Jehovah the great first Cause, the Creator of the heavens and of the earth, the self-existent, eternal and unchangeable God. They make known his holy law, the only true and ultimate standard of righteousness, the infallible test of virtue and of character, of truth and of morals ; by which all sentiments, opinions, doctrines and conduct are to be tried, and which is to be regarded as higher than the fitness of things, being before and lying back of all things, and as above the consciences of men, being the law of the human conscience.

They are sent to declare the sentence of this law respecting the children of men, from which they may learn their guilt and condemnation, and the relation they sustain to their Lawgiver as transgressors:

“Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.” This solemn and startling declaration being the truth, and coming armed with divine authority, finds a response in every sinner’s conscience. It is often delivered in the presence of some who do not hear it, whose minds are elsewhere ; but those who do attend to it and who are capable of understanding it, cannot hear it with indifference ; they must feel themselves condemned by it, and hence they will either make light of it and attempt to evade the application of it, or will rise in the enmity of their carnal minds against it with resentment and indignation, or convinced of its truth, they will acknowledge it. Even those who affect the greatest indifference respecting it, are at times troubled and made superstitious by it ; there are moments when they dare scarcely to be alone ; when the thoughts of death, and of what may be after death, intrude ; and when they are shocked by the reflection that this declaration may be true. We know how easy it is for God, through the instrumentality of his law, to disquiet the conscience ; to fill it with terrors and an overwhelming sense of sin.

But God does not leave them here ; his ministers are sent with a message of peace and reconciliation : they are sent to preach the gospel, to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation to the chief of sinners. It is this especially which gives them great advantage over all other teachers, and such an unparalleled influence

for good. They are permitted to teach the doctrine of forgiveness, and to make known the way in which it has been obtained, which gives assurance to all that it is efficacious. They are enabled to answer the momentous questions,—Wherewithal shall we come before the Lord? How shall man be just with God? What must we do to be saved? questions which have most painfully perplexed the minds of all who have been left without a revelation from heaven; nor have they ever been answered except in the gospel of Jesus Christ. If God is just, true and unchangeable, and if man is a sinner, and death the wages of sin, then how can the sinner escape his righteous doom?

The sentence of condemnation against him must be executed, or God must deny himself. There must be an atonement made for his sin, such as shall satisfy divine justice and be acceptable to God, or the sinner cannot escape. This truth has been felt and acknowledged by the whole human race; as appears in the various rites and ceremonies which have been religiously observed, in the voluntary humility, privations, self-denial, fasts, and bodily torture to which many have submitted with a view of making such atonement, and in the self-righteous spirit which characterizes all of us, in the tenacity with which we cling to some fancied goodness in ourselves, as a commendation to God and a ground of our acceptance. But we can never commend ourselves to God by any works we can perform, nor make an atonement for our

sins by any offerings of silver or gold, or of the blood of animals.

It is the blood of Christ shed in the sacrifice by the appointment of God, and that alone, which can cleanse from sin ; and the knowledge of this is essential to human happiness. The redemption that is in Christ is the only remedy for fallen man : only this meets the exigency of the case of the sinner, and can effectually restore him. The great work of the ministry is to make known, and to offer, this redemption. Is it not to be expected, therefore, that men who have this treasure intrusted to them, who have the chief good to impart instrumentally, who can teach the way of life, are prepared with promises of grace, of mercy and of strength, adapted to every case, and can administer consolation under all circumstances, should exert great influence ? They can speak with confidence and boldness, having certain knowledge of the truths they declare. They come, not to utter conjectures, to publish their own opinions ; nor yet do they come to amuse or to astonish, by setting forth the fruits of their own investigations in different departments of science. But they come in the name of the Lord of Hosts, to declare his statutes, and to make known his judgments, to publish matters of faith and duty, with authority to require men to believe and obey Him who sent them. They come to warn every man, and to teach every man, apprising them of the certain issue of a message, armed with the solemn sanctions of law.

Those who believe, through their preaching, are said to have received their message, "not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, the word of God;" and their faith stands "not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." Their declarations and denunciations are very different from the essays and orations delivered by men, as the offspring of their own minds, and the effect is different. The latter are regarded as matters of opinion, which may be embraced or rejected with impunity, and can never produce a deep, radical, and permanent change of character. They cannot control the ruling passions, govern the conscience, nor affect the hearts of men. Mere philosophy, falsely so called, human wisdom, the highest efforts of genius, the most moving persuasions to virtue, without the authority and blessing of God, never effected a spiritual reformation, in any, nor converted a single soul. "Where is the wise, where is the scribe, where is the disputer of this world?" What have they ever accomplished towards the salvation of men? "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" Has it not been shown before the universe, that man without a revelation cannot find out God; cannot discover the chief good, or the way to attain it? The messengers of God come to their fellow men as their best friends, to treat with them respecting their most precious interests, both for time and eternity. They come to do good, and not evil, to save men, and not to destroy them. They come to sympathize with them in their sorrows and secret

griefs, being men of like passions with them, and having been under the same condemnation: wherefore

III. THE RELATIONS WHICH THEY SUSTAIN, AND THE OFFICES WHICH THEY PERFORM, as teachers, as pastors, as peacemakers and comforters, cannot fail to commend them to the confidence and affections of those among whom they minister, and to give them a salutary influence.

They are the divinely appointed teachers of the world. He who commissioned them, sent them into all the world, declaring that to be their field of labour, and that their work was to instruct men in the most important and useful of all knowledge—the knowledge of God, of their duty, and of their destiny.

They are said, emphatically, to be the light of the world; having been more especially set for the defence and propagation of the gospel, as the means of promoting pure and undefiled religion. They have been set for the rise or fall of many, and must be a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death. They are God's witnesses against sin, in every form, and in favour of whatever things are true, just, pure, amiable, lovely, and of good report.

They are called to testify that God will render to every man according to his deeds. To them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribula-

tion and anguish. They are charged to make known what will be the rule of judgment in the day of final retribution, when He shall judge the secrets of men, and at the same time to hold forth the word of life. They are the standard-bearers in that army, through the instrumentality of which the Lord Jesus Christ is going forth conquering and to conquer, turning men from darkness to light, and delivering them from the power of Satan. Yet the weapons of their warfare are not carnal, but spiritual. They are armed with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With this, and according to its laws, principles and spirit, are they to form the character of the rising generation, to correct and regulate public sentiment, to promote the peace, order, and happiness of society, to relieve the distressed, to comfort the afflicted; to teach men how to live usefully, how to suffer patiently, and how to die triumphantly. It must be conceded by the impartial and unprejudiced, that the world has been more indebted to the sacred ministry for preserving and disseminating useful knowledge, sound literature, the true principles of liberty, of good government, and of human rights, than to any other order of men. They have ever been the friends of learning, of just laws, and of free government, and have ever manifested a willingness to make sacrifices for the public welfare.

Though they have on various occasions met with strong opposition, and have sometimes been persecuted

for bearing testimony to the truth, and for advocating the cause of God and of humanity, they have nevertheless persevered without fear, in the faithful discharge of their duty. Wherever there is an enlightened, faithful, and zealous ministry, we usually find an enlightened, liberal, active, and devoted people. There we find the Sabbath observed, benevolent institutions supported, schools encouraged, the social duties performed, the fountains of justice and of virtue uncorrupted, and the bonds of society made strong. Other means of doing good are important in their place as auxiliaries in evangelizing the world; but they are all subordinate to the ministry, and without it would be comparatively inefficient. The Bible, the Tract, the Sunday School societies, are great and noble institutions, we cannot express our sense of their importance, nor commend them too highly. But these are intimately connected with, and immediately dependent on the ministry, and could not be successfully and permanently sustained without it. We must send the living teacher with the Bible, or it will not be appreciated, read, or understood. If we would promote the more extensive and effectual dissemination of the Scriptures, we must send among the people those who have learned their value, discovered their excellence and glory, discerned the light of life revealed in them, and felt the consolation which they impart, and who may, from their own knowledge and experience, commend them to others; who may adapt and apply the word to

the hearts and consciences of men according to their different circumstances, and be able rightly to divide it, giving to each his portion in season. So if we would secure the sanctification of the Sabbath, circulate religious tracts, establish Common and Sabbath Schools, we must enlighten public sentiment, enlist men in behalf of these institutions, and through a living ministry. It is the paramount institution, by the appointment of God, and in effect includes all other benevolent institutions. It originates, and in the most effectual manner sustains, every benevolent enterprise. It opens the springs of life and furnishes the waters of salvation. It creates and directs into their proper channels all those tributary streams which are to make glad the city of our God; which are to animate, refresh, and fertilize the world. It brings into requisition those resources and agencies which, under God, are to be the means of bringing in the latter day glory.

IV. The influence which ministers of Christ are permitted to exert, is not derived so much from their divine authority, nor from the nature of their message, nor from the relations they sustain and the offices they perform, as from THE PRESENCE OF GOD WITH THEM. Without Him they can do nothing salutary or beneficial. They are entirely and constantly dependent on him. He must bestow upon them their gifts, impart to them their grace, strength, and commission. He must call them to their particular field of labour, and hold them up in it. He must keep and guide them from day to

day, and when they have watched, prayed, studied, and toiled, in planting and in watering, he must give the increase. His presence with the apostles, working in them and with them by many signs and wonders, was the secret of their success; we can assign no other adequate cause of it in their circumstances. They were without any worldly advantage or influence, without friends, wealth or patronage; up to the time of their public ministry they had lived in obscurity; when they entered upon it, they had to contend against the most bitter and inveterate hatred of Christ on the part of the Jews, against their deeply rooted prejudices, arising from their peculiar circumstances, in addition to the enmity of their carnal mind, and against the ignorance, superstition, and idolatry of the Gentiles. The doctrines which they taught were every where spoken against. They were pure, spiritual, and exclusive; condemning all the existing systems of religion—all the customs, all the worship, and all the gods of the nations. Those who embraced them must suffer persecution, take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and lay down their lives if need be. Yet they triumphed over all opposition; gained converts wherever they went; established Churches in every city, town and village; ordained ministers and elders in them, and saw multitudes added to them daily of such as were saved.

Surely we have in their success one of the most remarkable events that has ever occurred in the his-

tory of the world; an event which can be explained only by admitting that God was with them. He accompanied their preaching with the outpouring of the Spirit, gave divine energy to the word spoken by them, and made it the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation. He is still the same; his arm is not shortened that it cannot save; with him is the residue of the Spirit; and his promise to the ministry has not yet run out, and therefore may we expect that it will still exert its appropriate influence in the world. But we must remember, that its influence can be salutary, and exerted to its full extent, only when it is what God intended it to be. There is no charm in the name, nor any virtue in the office itself, to produce these great and glorious results, without any reference to the character of the persons filling it, or the manner in which they execute it. All God's institutions are wise, efficacious and salutary; but it is when appropriately used. The Sabbath is a blessing to man when it is sanctified; the ministry is a precious gift, and most benevolent institution, when it is exercised by pious, learned, prudent, and faithful men.

1. That they may accomplish the end for which the ministry was appointed and prove a blessing to the world, those who exercise it must be spiritually enlightened and godly men, having a knowledge and personal experience of the power and transforming influence of the truth, and a love for it; they must have confidence in its efficacy to sanctify and save them

that believe, as well as an assurance of the promised presence of God with them. They who would faithfully represent Christ, and make him known to others, must themselves know him and have his Spirit. They who would teach their fellow-men, as becometh the oracles of the living God, must be rooted and grounded in the truth. Their office requires them to beseech men, and to pray them in Christ's stead to become reconciled to God; to be affectionate, tender, and gentle, long-suffering and patient, earnest and importunate in calling sinners to repentance, and to speak the truth in love; to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, submitting cheerfully to the toils and privations of their employment; to be instant in season and out of season in watching for the souls of men as those that must give account; and to give themselves wholly to the work of feeding the flock of God, comforting and encouraging and building them up in faith and holiness. But this they cannot do in sincerity, nor with a willing mind, if they have never learned the value of their own souls, nor been made sensible of their own misery and danger as sinners—if they have not received Christ Jesus the Lord as their Saviour and are not walking in him—if they have not tasted the blessedness of having their own sins forgiven, of having peace with God and his love shed abroad in their hearts. God will have true and tried men for his ministry, men of acknowledged piety and of good report.

2. They must be intelligent and apt to teach ; men of cultivated minds, possessing those intellectual as well as moral qualifications which may render them acceptable and useful public teachers. They must have knowledge, and the faculty of communicating it, having been prepared by diligent study and reading to act as workmen that need not to be ashamed. Such a ministry, enlightened and sanctified, is essentially needed, when profane knowledge has reached an advanced state, when error and infidelity abound, and when subtle and active opposers of sound doctrine bring to their aid all the stores of human learning.

The Scriptures are to be translated into the different languages of the nations of the earth ; heathen adversaries are to be confounded ; the errors of false religious systems and of a corrupted Christianity are to be exposed, and their advocates are to be instructed and guided into the more excellent way of the gospel. While piety is undoubtedly the essential and most important qualification of a minister, piety alone is not sufficient.

There are still some who affect to despise learning as a qualification for the ministry, and who quote the example of the Apostles as authorizing unlettered men to exercise that office, forgetting that they were faithfully and fully educated in the school of Christ before they received their commission to preach the gospel, yea, after they had been with him and enjoyed his

immediate instructions for at least three years ; and when, after his resurrection, he had continued with them forty days, expounding to them the Scriptures, teaching them the nature of his kingdom, and the mysteries of his religion, he enjoined them to tarry at Jerusalem until they should receive the Holy Ghost ; and they did wait, and did receive the Spirit according to promise, in an extraordinary measure, qualifying them for their work. As men do not now enjoy such advantages, and have no promise of being prepared for the ministry in a miraculous manner, they must by diligent study acquire their theological knowledge, and be carefully trained under the supervision of the Church.

3. They must be sound in the faith, and must preach a pure gospel.

The importance of holding fast and of teaching the truth as it is in Jesus, appears from the nature of the case. God has a high and worthy end to accomplish by the ministry, even the manifestation of his own glory in the salvation of sinners. He has appointed means adapted to that end ; the nature and use of which, as well as the end to be accomplished, display in an eminent and peculiar manner his glory ; are adapted to humble the pride of the sinner, and to form the Christian character. These means are the teaching and preaching of Christ and him crucified ; the gospel of the grace of God ; holding fast and holding forth the form of sound words given by inspiration.

It is by the faithful use of these only, that God is made known and can be honoured, and that the sinner can be saved ; wherefore, he will bless no other means. Not to use them, or to pervert them, or to substitute something else in their place, though it may be professedly to secure the same end and be called another gospel, is inconceivably criminal in the sight of God ; being rebellion against him, a disregard of his authority, a misrepresentation of his perfections ; putting a slight upon and setting aside his infinite wisdom ; robbing him of the revenue of praise which would be brought to him, and depriving the sinner of the only means of salvation.

That radical, spiritual, and entire change of character, which must take place to prepare the sinner for heaven, can be effected through the knowledge, belief and obedience of the truth only. As it is in the natural world—like produces like, good seed produces good plants, and good trees good fruit—so is it in the moral world ; every doctrine, every sentiment and opinion, of a practical nature, will produce its like in the soul, on the character, and in the life. The character will answer to that which has formed it, and correspond to the principles and motives of action, as the impression on the wax answers to the seal by which it is made. Truth will produce right impressions, right sentiments and dispositions, and correct conduct ; error, which is opposite to it, must produce opposite sentiments and conduct. Hence, we may to some extent

judge in advance of the character of men, from the doctrines they believe.

Truth is also represented as the proper aliment of the soul. The mind is to be stayed and strengthened by it. The spirit is to be refreshed and nourished by it, as the body is nourished with wholesome food. The believer through the knowledge of the truth increases with the increase of God; becomes stronger and stronger, and grows into the likeness of Christ; nor can the same effect be produced by poison, that is by error ministered to him. God must be apprehended as he is, that he may be adored and confided in. The sinner must know himself in his true state and character, that he may be humbled and renounce all self-confidence. He must apprehend the way of justification through Christ, or he can never receive forgiveness, peace, and eternal life. He must know the Saviour in the constitution of his person, in the exercise of his offices and in his work, or he cannot have him made unto him of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Obvious as all this appears to us, and although the Scriptures teach us that a knowledge of the truth is essential to salvation and to our happiness; though they exhort us to buy the truth and sell it not, also wisdom, instruction, and understanding, and caution us in the most solemn manner against error and the teachers of error, the importance of it is not realized.

⌚ This subject is one, concerning which there pre-

vails an alarming and most criminal indifference. We are told that it is of little importance what we believe; that there are good people of all creeds; that ignorance respecting many truths, about which there is such a diversity of sentiment, cannot be a bar to salvation; that if the heart is only right and the intention good, no questions will be asked about our faith. Thus, mixing some truth with error, and confounding creeds with names or different denominations, many are misled, and induced by those commonplace observations to pride themselves upon their superior liberality and charity. It is, as we readily admit, a matter of small moment by what name we may be called. There are pious, faithful, and happy servants of God among all Christian denominations; but these all hold the same form of sound words. They all believe substantially the same doctrines. They all pray to the same God; have access by the same Spirit to the same Father, through the same Mediator, and obey his commandments and observe his ordinances. They, being many, are one in Christ and members one of another.

As to the goodness of heart and intention, we all know that God looketh on the heart, and requireth truth in the inward man. If the heart be right with God; if the prevalent desire and aim be to the Lord; if the habitual intention be to please and honour God in all things, the life will be consistent; and it will be the evidence that the person has been accepted and saved through Christ, and has received a new heart and a right

spirit ; and no one will be more willing and ready to acknowledge the natural deceitfulness and wickedness of his heart, that in his flesh there dwells no good thing, and that the present changed state of his heart has been produced by the Spirit of God, through the knowledge and belief of the truth, than he himself. But the heart cannot be right, the intention cannot be upright, without correct views of God in Christ, and of the system of truth taught in the Bible. Can the heart of that sinner be right, who regards the Supreme Being as too merciful to punish sin? Does he honour God, who makes him like himself, and who denies his justice and his providence? Will his religion be the same, his obedience just as strict and acceptable, and his life as holy, as though he believed in an essentially holy God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and cannot look upon sin ; in a God at hand, who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will, and numbers the very hairs of our head? Can his heart be right, can he be humble, and feel his indebtedness to the grace of God, who thinks that human nature has received very little injury from the fall ; that man's dispositions are naturally good, though they may be corrupted by example ; that by proper culture of the natural powers he may commend himself to the favour of God, and secure for himself happiness beyond the grave? Can he feel the same anxiety about his state ; be as importunate in prayer, and as careful to avoid sin, as though he believed himself to be lost and help-

less, and felt that unless he can obtain mercy he must perish ; and that if God does not save him and change his heart, he cannot be saved ? Can his heart be right with God, who rejects his only begotten and well beloved Son as a Saviour, and degrades him to the condition of a mere man ? Can he have access to God, or know the Father, who does not know the Son, nor acknowledge him as the way, the truth, and the life ; who sets aside his atonement, his merits and intercession, and the mission by him of the Holy Spirit ? Can he have as good a hope, and feel as grateful for it ; will he be just as devout, have as intimate communion with God, as much peace and joy, be as safe in the judgment and as happy throughout eternity, as though he did believe that the name of Jesus was the only name given under heaven among men whereby we can be saved ; that he is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, having been made perfect through suffering, and being God almighty, God all-sufficient ? But we need not further illustrate the absurdity of this popular sentiment. The truth of God has been revealed, may be discovered, being distinguished by certain infallible marks, and must be believed by us, that by its influence on the soul, through the operation of the Spirit, we may be healed of all our spiritual maladies.

Now, from all this we may learn the importance of such a ministry, and the obligation resting upon the Church to furnish it ; and also the high and fearful

responsibility of those who may be more immediately charged with the duty of training and preparing men for it. For whilst it is acknowledged to be the prerogative of God to raise up and qualify men for the ministry, he has at the same time enjoined it as a duty on the Church to pray to him, as the Lord of the harvest, to send forth labourers into his harvest; which prayer includes in it the duty which is elsewhere expressly required, of seeking out, of training and watching over faithful men, who may teach others also, and enter the fields which are white to the harvest. And if men are to be taught, and proved, and carefully prepared for the ministry, it can be done more effectually, and in a shorter time, at a public school of the prophets like this, in which a number of teachers may devote their whole time to their instruction, and, by a division of labour, attend more thoroughly to the different branches of their education, than in private by a single pastor, whose ministerial duties and domestic avocations engross the largest portion of his time. If there has been disappointment experienced by the churches, as to the standard of ministerial excellence and qualifications in young men educated at Theological Seminaries, it surely has not arisen from the greatly increased means of instruction furnished by them, nor from the peculiar advantages of social and religious intercourse enjoyed in them. We should rather look for the cause in the lack of talent and application in the candidates, or in the short time

spent at the seminaries ; the hurried manner in which the course of instruction is in some instances necessarily passed over ; and also in the change of taste among the people, and their advancement in knowledge. Who does not know that the churches and congregations of this land require discourses of a far higher order than those which satisfied their fathers ; and at the same time demand a vast increase of ministerial labour in fostering and sustaining benevolent institutions, and thus abridge the pastor's hours of study ? But we need not stop to argue the question, whether in the present state of the Church and of society, and in view of the pressing demand for ministers, we require Theological Seminaries. Our Church has long since decided the question ; and her experience, with the blessing of God upon her efforts, to furnish what she has judged the best means of a religious and Christian education for those who are seeking the ministry, has proved the wisdom of her decision. Who can estimate the influence for good, the salutary, conservative, and saving influence, which this Seminary has been permitted to exert during the brief period of its operations ? What would have been the condition of our Church without it ? Would the same number of men have reached the ministry, or could they have entered on their labours as soon, and with equal qualifications ; could we have had as much union in the truth, unity of the Spirit, and uniformity, which, when it is according to the Scrip-

tures, contributes so much to the strength, comfort, and edification of the churches; could we have secured as great a degree of Christian harmony and communion among our people; could the demand for pious, intelligent, and faithful ministers at home among our own teeming population, and at our missionary posts among the heathen, have been met to the extent of even the present partial supply; could we have realized the incidental advantages, those salutary and precious influences which have been exerted by the Professors through their writings, and which are enjoyed by the Church universal, if this Seminary had not been established? We think not; and therefore, whilst we feel thankful for what has been done, we would regard it as an earnest only of what may still, with the blessing of God, be accomplished through its instrumentality.

You, my dear brother, have been called in Providence to take a part in the labour of sustaining the reputation, of adding, if possible, to the increasing importance and usefulness of this institution, and of aiding in the preparation of such a ministry as I have endeavoured to describe, and as was contemplated by the founders of our Seminary. The Church has expressed her confidence in you, as one qualified to be a teacher of those who are to be her ministers. A higher honour could not have been conferred—a place of greater responsibility cannot be occupied. Allow me to congratulate you on the event, more especially under the

peculiar and beautifully interesting circumstances of your introduction to this field of labour, having for your coadjutors a venerated father and a beloved brother. Had you been left to your own choice, you could not have brought yourself into a more delightful employment, or a more desirable and pleasant copartnership in labour. As you have accepted and been regularly inducted into this office, it has been made my duty, as one of the representatives of the Church which has appointed you thereto, and in behalf of the Board of Directors of this Seminary, solemnly to charge you to be faithful to the trust committed to you in this new relation. I do this the more willingly and frankly, because I can do it without any feeling of suspicion or apprehension, and because I know the importance of the work is felt by no one more sensibly than by yourself; that the interests of the Seminary are as dear to you as they are to us; and the doctrines which we desire to be taught are those which you love, and have publicly and repeatedly professed. We charge you, therefore, to continue of the same mind; hold fast the form of sound words which you have received, and teach none other things than such as are contained in it, or are consistent with it. Although in your immediate department you are not required to give direct instruction in the doctrinal truths of the Bible, yet in tracing the evidence of God's goodness and faithfulness in the history of his Church, and of the tendency to apostasy in man, you will be called to notice those errors which

have marred her beauty, disturbed her peace, and retarded her progress, and will have an opportunity of refuting them, and of guarding the youth under your care against them. Certain it is, that those who are left to fall into error, do and will find occasions to teach it in every department. We therefore feel it to be essential to the good character and welfare of the Institution, and to the safety of the students, that all our professors and teachers should be sound in the faith. Especially is it required of you to teach clearly, explicitly, and strongly, the true nature, the scriptural organization, government, and discipline of the Church of God. The department of Church History and Church Government, always important, is peculiarly so in the present day; when we are in danger of losing our ministerial character and our church standing, when we are denied our privileges as Christians, by those who maintain that the validity and efficacy of religious ordinances depend upon an invisible and imaginary influence communicated by a broken chain containing as all acknowledge many corrupt links, reaching back as is supposed to an earthly head, instead of the authority of Jesus Christ and the promised influences of the Holy Spirit. These men would cover up our title deed from the great Supreme and only Head of the Church, with rubbish gathered from the fathers and ancient authors. The old preposterous and exclusive claims of the Man of Sin are again to be refuted. The old controversy respecting the religion of sacraments,

having been revived with fresh pretensions, must be engaged in and settled over again. The contest for ecclesiastical despotism and domination must again be resisted, but all with spiritual weapons. Bring to light all that the Bible and that history teach on this subject, and so instruct the youth under your care, that they may be able to not only resist for themselves, all temptations to embrace the fooleries of Popery in every form, but also instrumentally to deliver others out of them.

I need not remind you of the importance of taking heed to yourself. In proportion to the responsibility of your office as a teacher here, is the obligation on you to maintain an humble, a close, and an intimate walk with God. You need his grace and strength to enable you to discharge your arduous duties, and at the same time to set an example of diligence and prudence, of watchfulness and prayer, of self-denial and devotedness, of meekness, gentleness, patience, perseverance, and love, which may be safely followed by those whom you instruct. It is your happiness to know, from past experience, the answer to the question, Who is sufficient for these things? and also, how your soul may be kept prosperous and in health. Abide in that heaven-born knowledge, and cultivate that precious experience. Thou, that teachest others, do not forget to teach thyself. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant. Them that honour me, I will honour, saith the

Lord. We know that they only are safe whom he keeps. The melancholy instances of backsliding, of falling into sin and of apostasy, on the part of some who once stood high in the confidence of the Church, stand out in her history as beacons, giving us solemn warning, not to be high-minded, but to fear. Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall, for it is not in man that walketh, to direct his steps. Men of talent and learning appear to be more in danger than others of falling into error. They are tempted to speculate upon and about the truth, to indulge in self-confidence and pride of erudition. They attempt to be wise above revelation, to pry into the secret things of God. Aiming at new discoveries in theology, they torture the sacred text; by ingenious and plausible criticisms, adopt a forced construction which may countenance their bold and presumptuous conjectures, and thus offend God. They are wise in their own conceit, forget to pray, and indulge in a haughty spirit. God resisteth the proud, and as a punishment for their refusing with an humble and childlike spirit to believe the truth on his authority, he gives them up to strong delusions that they should believe a lie. In no other way can we account for the lengths in error and absurdity to which some men of gigantic intellect and of the greatest learning have been left to go.

On the other hand, the humble, the meek, those who are willing to sit at the feet of Christ and learn of him, and are prepared to receive the kingdom of

God as little children—have the promise of his grace, of his teaching, guidance, and preservation unto life everlasting. And now we commend you to God, who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy ; and to the word of his grace which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are justified ; praying that he would make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever and ever. AMEN.