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A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED IN

NORFIELD, MAY 29TH, 1836,

BY JOHN NOYES,

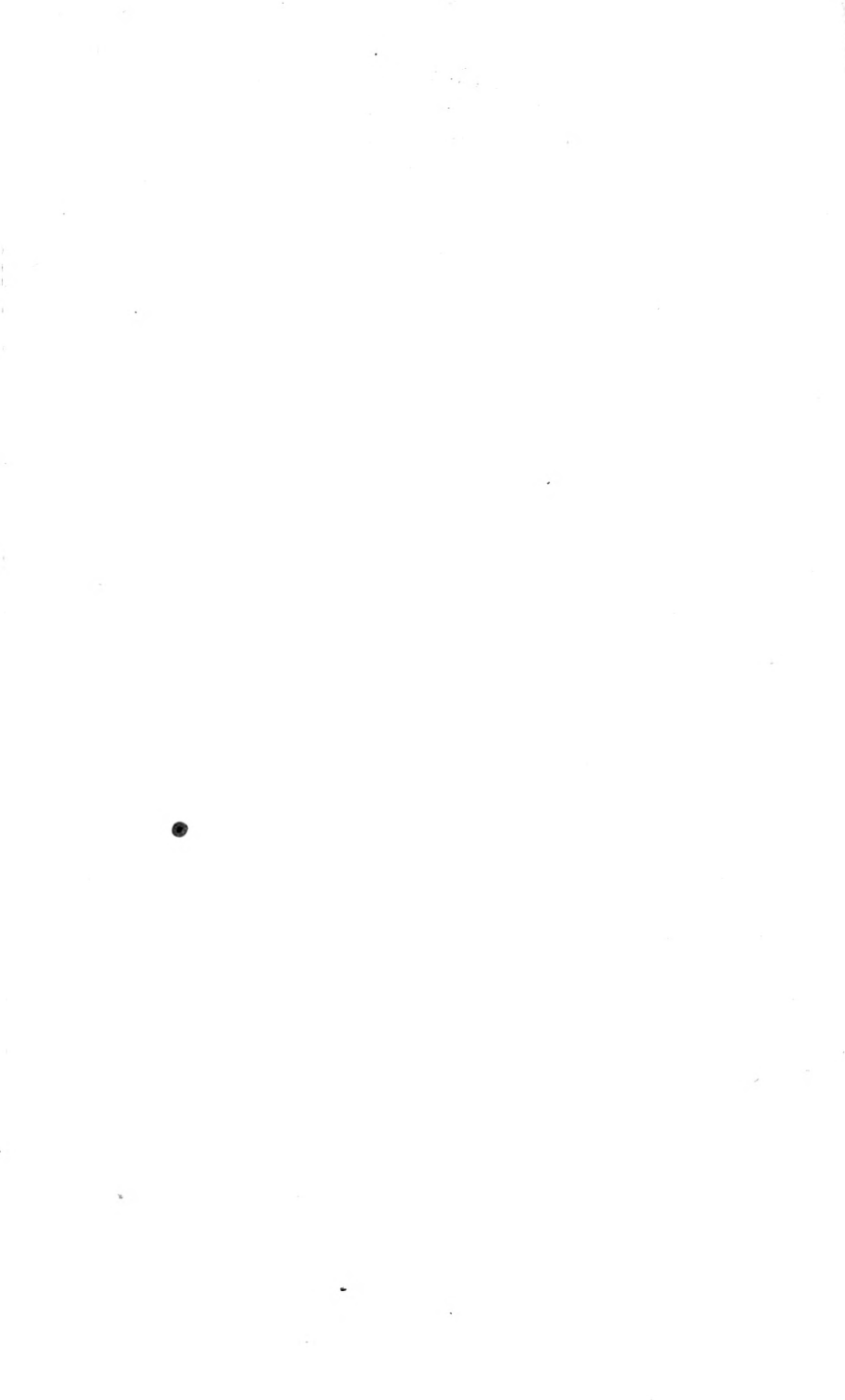
AT THE

CLOSE OF THE FIFTIETH YEAR OF HIS MINISTRY.

NEW HAVEN :

HITCHCOCK & STAFFORD, PRINTERS.

1839.



DISCOURSE.

1 CORINTHIANS ii, 1, 2.—And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God: For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

THE Apostle Paul was a pattern to all Gospel ministers. He sought not his own glory, but the glory of his Lord and Master. It was his fixed determination that Christ should be magnified in his body, whether it were by life, or by death.

He was a chosen vessel unto Christ, to bear his name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. (Acts ix. 15.) At his conversion, the Lord Jesus said unto him, "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of those things which thou hast seen, and of those things in which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me." Acts xxvi. 16, &c.

Paul was commissioned particularly to preach to the Gentiles, as appears by the words addressed to him by the Saviour, already quoted. He speaks of his being appointed a preacher, and an Apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. (1 Tim. i. 11.) Also, that the Gospel of the uncircumcision was committed to him, as that of the circumcision was unto Peter. (Gal. ii. 7.)

Corinth was a city of Greece, and consequently a Gentile city, as all were called Gentiles who were not of the Jewish nation. The Apostle gathered a Church in Corinth, having

preached the Gospel in that city. Hence, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, he addresses himself to the Church of God, which is in Corinth, to them that are sanctified, called to be saints, &c.

The first notice we have of his visiting Corinth, is in the 18th of Acts, where we read that he departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; and many of the Corinthians hearing the word from his mouth, believed and were baptized; and he continued with them a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

Having met with much opposition from the Jews at Corinth, and having spent the time he thought proper among the brethren in that city, he took his leave of them, and passed on to Ephesus, and from thence to other places, preaching the Gospel.

This Epistle to the Corinthians was written in answer to one which that Church wrote to him concerning certain questions which they wished him to answer, as appears from chap. vii. 1. He accordingly gave them instructions on the subjects proposed to him.

In our text, he reminds them of his first coming among them, and in what manner he came, or rather, in what manner he did not come to them.

“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.” Here he asserts that he did not come to the Corinthians in the character of an orator, whose aim is to attract the attention of his hearers by a masterly display of words, and by ingenious reasonings, dictated by human wisdom. He came not to gain the admiration of men by his eloquence and learning, or to suit himself to their notions, by addressing them in a manner calculated to please, rather than to profit them.

He came to deliver the testimony of God concerning the way of salvation, even the truths of the Gospel, to which God himself had borne witness, and which he was sent to communicate to them; but not with excellency of speech, or with excellency of wisdom, as now explained. He determined not to know any thing among them but the plain, simple truths of the Gospel.

He was determined not to amuse his hearers with philoso-

phical disquisitions, or with the recital of principles and facts of ancient or modern literature.

He was determined not to embellish his discourses with high-wrought language, adapted to captivate the ear, and hereby to lead his hearers to overlook the all-important doctrines of the Gospel.

He was determined not to make himself the prominent object, in his preaching; but Christ Jesus, and the humbling doctrines of the cross. He was determined to declare the simple truth, without regard to the prejudices, or wishes of his hearers to the contrary: to know no man after the flesh. To the Galatians, he says, "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." (i. 10.)

The Apostle speaks much of his preaching as not partaking of the wisdom of this world, and he sets it forth as a matter of great importance that the Gospel should be preached in its simplicity and purity; that is, without human mixture, or without a conformity to worldly views and principles. In the 4th verse he says, "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of men's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power."

By this we are to understand, his preaching had not the aid of the arts of persuasion invented by man; but was attended with the influences of the Holy Spirit, which demonstrated its truth, and manifested it to be the power of God unto salvation. It is added, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. In the preceding chapter he says, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel; not with the wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God." Again, "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews, a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks, foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." The Gospel is the highest wisdom: it is the wisdom of God, as the Apostle calls it, v. 6: "Howbeit, we speak wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the

wisdom of this world, which cometh to nought ; but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory." Again, "Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given us of God ; which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

Having thus opened the text, I shall take occasion from it to show, First, the style and manner in which the ministers of the Gospel ought to preach. Secondly, That it should be their fixed determination when they enter on their work, and ever after, to make Christ and him crucified the burden of their preaching.

First, We are to consider the style and manner in which ministers ought to preach.

Here I would observe, that they ought to use great plainness of speech. By this, I would not be understood to mean, that they should allow themselves in vulgar expressions, or in language that is flat, or rough ; such language is unbecoming the dignity of the pulpit, and has a tendency to bring the ministry into contempt. A minister may preach in a plain style, and yet his language may be neat, and not offend the most scrupulous ear. He should aim to be clearly understood, not only by the most intelligent part of his audience ; but by those of small capacities, and of little learning.

If he use language which is not commonly understood, he speaks as it were, in an unknown tongue, to many of his hearers.

The Apostle to the Corinthians says, "Except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken ? for ye shall speak into the air."

Again he says, "I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." 1 Cor. xiv. 19.

A person may use words that are readily understood, but he may not so express his thoughts as to be comprehended by those whom he addresses. He ought, therefore, to make it his aim to be clearly understood by his audience in general.

Ministers of the Gospel should be full in preaching the truth. They should not keep back any thing that is profitable to their hearers, as Paul appealed to the Ephesians, that he had not. (Acts xx. 20.) They should declare the whole counsel of God—the whole system of Gospel truth. They should not dwell on one part of Gospel doctrine, to the neglect of other parts; but every doctrine should have its place in their preaching, so that its connection with the whole may be seen by the hearer.

Ministers should endeavor to preach in a forcible manner. They should express themselves in language calculated to make an impression on the minds and consciences of their hearers:—to impress the truth, so that it may, with a divine blessing, arouse them to consideration and to action. Although it is the spirit of God who only can cause the truth to become effectual to saving purposes, yet there are certain modes of delivering it which are calculated to arrest the attention, and to interest the hearer in the subject of discourse: and as the preaching of the word is ordained for the conversion and sanctification of men, so God oftener blesses the word to this purpose, when it is delivered in a manner most becoming its importance. It should be delivered with engagedness; and it ought to be evident to the audience that the preacher believes and feels what he says. Said an ancient author, “If you would have me feel, you must feel yourself;” or words to this purpose—and there is much truth in the remark.

But a preacher may depend too much on his own exertions in producing the desired effect, and overact in the pulpit. His manner must be according to the nature of his subject, and according as it is treated.

The voice must sometimes be mild, and sometimes raised above its natural tone, just as propriety dictates in view of the matter communicated.

A minister in his preaching should not make it his object to excite the passions of men. His great object should be to enlighten their understandings and to amend their hearts and lives, on the principles of the Gospel.

Men's passions are often excited so as to fill them with religious zeal, while they are very ignorant of the doctrines of

the Bible. It was a saying of President Edwards, "that heat without light is not good, or that light should be combined with heat, in religious experience."

True religion is, indeed, calculated to warm the heart, and to fill it with holy zeal ; but its principles must be understood, or our zeal will not be according to knowledge.

Ministers should not amuse nor perplex their hearers with fine spun speculations, and metaphysical niceties. These can be understood but by few ; and are unprofitable to those who do understand them.

A minister may starve his people by preaching on nice points in theology, or on what are called metaphysics.

Some texts of Scripture are hard to be understood, and of doubtful meaning ; but which are not essential to our present or future welfare. Such texts ought not to occupy a minister's attention and preaching, to the neglect of the plainer and more important parts of the scriptures. If he undertake to handle them to show his ingenuity, he may be wide from their true meaning, and his labor may be to no good purpose.

A preacher ought not to make popularity his great aim. There is danger of a minister's seeking to be popular rather than useful. If he have popular talents, he needs to be on his guard that he be not more anxious to sustain his reputation as a pulpit orator, than to serve the cause of Christ.

A man may be possessed of extraordinary talents as a speaker, and yet be a faithful minister. He may declare the truth without fear or favor. Such a one may be eminently useful, while one of the opposite character may soothe and flatter his hearers, and secure their admiration to their ruin, and to the injury of his own soul.

A preacher should, indeed, choose out acceptable words, as the wise man says ; but, as he also says, they should be upright words, even the words of truth. (Prov. x. 12.) He may use words or expressions which will only irritate, when the same things for substance might be said in a way which would not give offense, and yet effect all the good designed by the mode of speaking, now brought up to view.

In conclusion, I would observe, if a minister's great aim is to excel in all the beauties of oratory, and to commend him-

self and his preaching, by the display of profound learning, and of uncommon discernment, he totally mistakes the errand on which he is sent, and the cross of Christ is made of none effect. His business is, not to gain the applause of men:—it is not to act the part of a stage player, or that of a Roman or Grecian orator; but it is to declare the truths of the Gospel in their simplicity and purity, not mixing them with the suggestions of human wisdom, nor reducing them to the standard of human reason, as the test of truth.

We pass on to the second general head of our discourse, viz. : That it ought to be the fixed determination of Gospel ministers, when they enter on their work, and ever after, to make Christ, and him crucified, the burden of their preaching.

The word Christ, signifies anointed. The word Messiah, has the same signification. Jesus of Nazareth is the anointed of God, as he is set apart to the prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices. The word Christ, then, denotes that he is the Prophet, Priest, and King of his people. When the Apostle says in our text, “that he was determined not to know any thing among the Corinthians, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified;” he means, that he resolved to preach with no other view than to exhibit a crucified Saviour to them. Preaching Christ is an expression used to signify the exhibition of the doctrine of Christ.

Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. (Acts viii. 5.) Paul preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. (Acts ix. 20.)

To preach Christ, is to set forth his divine nature, as united with the human nature. It is to declare his birth; his life; his miracles; his doctrines and precepts; his condemnation, and the circumstances attendant upon it; his crucifixion, resurrection, ascension to heaven, and intercession; as also, his coming to judge the world at the last day.

To preach Christ, is to preach the terms of salvation through him, and the awful consequences of rejecting him.

The Jews stumbled at the doctrine of a crucified Saviour. They thought that his being put to death was full proof that Christ was not the Messiah promised to their nation. But this

was necessary to his fulfilling the part of a Saviour. Paul therefore preached Christ crucified, and declared that herein was the power of God, and the wisdom of God. He says, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Gal. vi. 14.

To exhibit Christ simply as a man of unblemished character, and as having taught good precepts, and as dying a martyr to his religion, is not to preach the Gospel. His suffering crucifixion as an atonement for sin, lies at the foundation of the Christian religion; and therefore the Apostle, in our text, holds him up to view as a crucified Saviour.

Now when ministers of the Gospel enter on their work, and ever after, that it ought to be their fixed determination to make Christ and him crucified, the burden of their preaching, appears from their commission. "Go ye, therefore, and preach the Gospel to every creature," is the commission which Christ has given them.

To preach the Gospel, is to preach Christ, and him crucified, as we have already noted.

If ministers fail of doing this; if they depart from the simplicity of the Gospel; if they amuse their hearers with that which is foreign from the doctrine of Christ, or if they preach themselves rather than Christ Jesus, they are not faithful to their trust: they fail of fulfilling their embassy, as has in effect been observed. In faithfulness to their Lord and Master, they are bound to know nothing among the people for whom they labor, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. They are to preach the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, whoever may be offended by it, or whatever temptation they may be under to go aside from it, or to keep it out of sight. Ministers are stewards of the mysteries of God; and the Apostle tells us, "that it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." (1 Cor. iv. 1, 2.) Ministers who are not faithful in preaching the Gospel, and in the discharge of their ministerial duty, cannot give a good account of their stewardship, when the time shall arrive that they may no longer be stewards, and when their Lord and Master comes to reckon with them.

How dreadful the thought of being condemned as an unprofitable servant !

If ministers are not faithful in delivering their message ; if they do not preach Christ, and him crucified, according to their commission ; if they daub with untempered mortar, and cry *peace, peace*, when there is no peace, the blood of souls will be required at their hands ; but if they preach Christ truly and faithfully, they will deliver their own souls, and their labors will not be in vain in the Lord. They will have some precious fruit of their labors. The seed which they sow may long lie buried in the dust, but it will spring up when watered by the showers of divine grace, and bear fruit unto eternal life. Christ says to his ministers, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world ;” and will he be with them, and not bless their labors ?

A minister’s faithfulness, however, is not to be measured by his success, or by the apparent good resulting from his ministrations in the conversion of sinners. He may see but little alteration for the better in those to whom he ministers ; but after he is dead and gone, his counsels and prayers may be remembered, and be the means of salvation to numbers who had before remained unaffected by the truth delivered from his lips.

In view of the considerations now presented, does it not follow that when ministers enter on their work, and ever after, it should be their fixed determination to make Jesus Christ, and him crucified, the burden of their preaching ?—that they should teach no other doctrine than the doctrines of the cross ; and that they should have no other aim than to advance the cause and interest of the Redeemer ?

And now, my friends, I would advert to the circumstance which has induced me to preach this discourse, and to choose the subject presented before you at this time.

On the 31st of May, 1786, I was ordained to the work of the ministry, and installed as pastor of this church. Tuesday next will complete fifty years of my ministry, as an ordained preacher ; and next October, fifty-three years since I was licensed to preach the Gospel. My first discourse was delivered in this place.

Before I enter upon the history of my ministry among you, I will endeavor to give you the best account in my power of this ecclesiastical society, from its formation.

A number of people from Greensfarms and Greenfield, moved into this place, as new settlers, a little before the year 1757. They usually attended public worship in the places where they originally belonged. By the parish records, I find that the first society meeting was held the 23d day of June, 1757. This must have been soon after the parish was set off as an ecclesiastical society; for it is said that it was legally warned by a writ given out by Robert Walker, Esq., justice of the peace for the county of Fairfield.

A vote was passed, May 10, 1758, to build a meeting house, 40 by 30 feet.

It appears, that before the building was raised, application was made to the County Court, for a committee to fix the stake, which was accordingly done. The house was raised and covered by the 7th of December, 1758. Pews and body seats and a pulpit were erected; but nothing was done to the galleries, and the house was never plastered.

December 6, 1784, it was voted to build a new meeting house, where a committee appointed by the County Court, should make the location; and the materials of the old house, so far as might answer the purpose, were to be wrought into the new one.

Accordingly, the old house was taken down, and the frame set up in the center of the society, and newly covered. The old doors, pews, and seats were replaced: the galleries were then finished, and the house plastered and painted.

But to revert to the proceedings of the society, in regard to a minister.

On the 4th day of July, 1757, voted to give Mr. Samuel Sherwood, of Fairfield, a call to settle with them, in the Gospel ministry; which call he accepted, and was accordingly ordained, August 17, 1757.

At the same time a church was formed of members of other churches residing in the society. The church was first constituted with twelve male members, and soon, nineteen more, male and female, were added to the church, from neighboring

churches. "Lient. Daniel Andrews, and Ensign David Coley, were chosen to the office of deacon, and accepted:" and they served as deacons through the whole of Mr. Sherwood's ministry, and a great part of mine. They served as long as their age permitted. They died in very advanced life, and were pillars in the church and society.

Rev. Samuel Sherwood departed this life, May 25th, 1783, in the 26th year of his ministry, and in the 54th year of his age. He was a man highly respected for his talents and consistency of character.

According to church records, sixty-nine were admitted into full communion, by profession, under his ministry, but the people generally owned the covenant, as it was called, and had their children baptized without coming up to the Lord's supper. This practice then generally prevailed through the State, but it is now done away. Under his ministry there were three hundred and twenty-three baptisms.

From the time of my ordination, I continued to serve you in the ministry till March, 1806, when my powers of utterance failed me, and a general debility pervaded my system. As I could preach no longer, I discontinued my public labors for a year, and then, seeing no prospect of my speedy recovery, the society appointed a committee to know my mind concerning the future supply of the pulpit. Afterwards they passed a vote for my dismissal, in view of all circumstances, and I concurred with them in calling the consociation for this purpose. Our connection was accordingly dissolved by the consociation, on the 26th of May, 1807. I was therefore your minister, before my dismissal, twenty-one years, within a few days. Since my settlement, and up to this time, one hundred have been received into this church, by profession. Twenty-five, who had before professed religion, but who had not come up to the ordinance of the Lord's supper, and fourteen from other churches. There are now about forty members belonging to this church, male and female. I have administered two hundred and sixty-one baptisms in this place. I have noted more than four hundred and forty funeral discourses, that I have preached here and elsewhere. These have been either at the time of interment, or on the Sabbath following.

It was almost two years and a half after the suspension of my public labors here, before I resumed preaching, and then it was with great weakness, that I performed the services of the pulpit. I supplied other vacancies, and for some years preached here a part of the time. For about twelve years past, I have not stately supplied any where else ; but with little intermission, have labored for you in the Gospel ministry, till last November, and for a few Sabbaths since.

In consideration of my advanced age, and your good, I judged it best to retire from stated ministerial services, and recommended it to you to look out for a younger man to fill my place.

In 1830, you erected this new house, and it was dedicated to Almighty God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be devoted to his worship and service, April 13, 1831. You were prospered in your undertaking. We had help from abroad, and advanced of our property sufficient for the accomplishment of the building, and I trust that none of us grudge what we have done to effect so important an object.

I have served you long in the ministry. Although my pastoral relation to you was formally dissolved almost thirty years ago, yet I have remained with you, and have performed the duties of a stated pastor here for the greater part of the time. When I was preaching in other societies, I was with you on the week, and subject to your call on special occasions, such as sickness and funerals.

When I came to you as your minister, my conscience bears me witness, that I came with a sincere desire to advance your spiritual interest. I did not aim at excellency of speech, or of human wisdom ; but my aim was to preach the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ in a plain and intelligible manner : to hold him up as the prominent object of your contemplation, and to lead you to him as your only Saviour, and righteousness. I think I can say, that I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. There is not more than one person present who has heard me from the beginning of my ministry. The assembly to which I first preached have, almost all, gone down to the congregation of the dead. Five

only remain, who were voters at my settlement. I have but few witnesses to the manner of my preaching in the early part of my ministry ; but I would appeal to those of you who have set under my voice, whether I have not made Jesus Christ, and him crucified, the burden of my public labors ; whether I have not preached the Gospel in its simplicity and purity ; whether I have flattered my hearers with any delusive doctrines, or entertained them with subjects foreign from the great principles of our most holy religion. And as to my private instructions, I would appeal to those who have heard them, whether I have not held up the necessity of repentance and faith ; repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, as the indispensable conditions of salvation ; and the necessity of holiness of heart and life, as qualifications for the kingdom of heaven.

I am sensible of many deficiencies in the discharge of my ministry ; but I know that I have earnestly desired and sought the spiritual welfare of the people of my charge. I lost my health and strength by exposure in serving them ; but I have never failed, as I remember, to go on ministerial duty when called for, or to fulfill any appointments, if in my power.

I say not these things to commend myself, but to lead you to think whether you have improved the opportunities which you have had for religious instruction as you ought to have done, and whether you can excuse yourselves from coming to the light, on the ground that the light has not been held up to your view.

My ministry has not been crowned with signal success. If the number of conversions by my instrumentality were to be the measure of my faithfulness, I fear that I should be found greatly lacking ; but who except Jehovah can tell the amount of the good which has resulted from my labors, be it more or less ? This disclosure is reserved to the judgment day. A minister's concern should be, not to know what fruit has been produced by his labors, but how he shall best fulfill his ministry, and whether he has been faithful in it.

His reward will be according to his faithfulness, not according to the success of his ministrations. " Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

You are now in a destitute state, in regard to a preached Gospel. This is not a condition in which you ought to rest. You must have a minister, or you will suffer in your most important interests ; and he must be a good minister, otherwise you cannot expect that his labors among you will be blest.

I have copied the address of the consociation to this church and society, at the time of my dismissal, and will read it to you.

“The consociation, being deeply affected at the situation of this church and society, now destitute of a spiritual guide ; and considering the vast importance of a preached Gospel as the great means of salvation, desire to impress upon their minds the necessity of exerting themselves in supporting the Gospel among them ; for, saith the scripture, ‘How shall men believe in him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher?’ At the same time they desire to recall the minds of this people to a serious consideration of the dispensation of Providence, which has led to this solemn event. It becomes them seriously to reflect on the manner in which they have improved a preached Gospel. It becomes them seriously to inquire of themselves whether they have carefully attended to the instructions which they have, from time to time, received from their spiritual guide ; or whether they have not, by their neglect of the means of salvation with which they have been favored, given God occasion thus to visit them. If this be the case, let them be entreated to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, that in due time they may be exalted.

“We commend them to the grace and protection of the great Head of the Church, beseeching him to keep them and preserve them from unhappy divisions, and in his own time to open a door for the resettlement of the Gospel ministry among them.”

Although this address was delivered almost thirty years ago, yet the instruction which it contains is very applicable to the present state of this church and society ; and I would hope that it may have its due weight.

I have repeatedly laid before you the vast importance of the

Gospel ministry, and the sad consequences to a people of being without it. I know of nothing new that I can add on this subject. I may give you some advice, however, which may be useful, if followed.

In the first place, let it be your unwavering determination, with the blessing of God, that you will, if possible, obtain a Gospel minister. For this end be willing to impart so much of your substance as may be necessary for accomplishing the object. Think not that this will require too great a sacrifice; but consider what you will lose, if you do not make the sacrifice, and what will become of your children, and of the society in general.

Look not for a man of the first rate talents; for such are not to be obtained by small societies like this; and besides, you had better have a minister of moderate abilities, who can "become all things to all men," and who is willing to spend and be spent, if he can be the means of saving precious souls, rather than one of shining gifts, who is so charmed with his own excellencies, as to be above taking due care of his flock. I would not intimate that a talented minister cannot be a good pastor; but wisdom, prudence, and faithfulness are not always combined with great talents in a minister.

Before you settle a minister, be satisfied that his standing is good; that his qualifications are equal to his work; that he is a profitable preacher, if not a great one; that his great aim is, to please God and to profit his hearers; that he has a good knowledge of human nature, and knows how to adapt himself to different characters and circumstances; that he is wise, and prudent, and faithful; and that he preaches the genuine doctrines of the Gospel. But you must not expect perfection in any man. You must overlook some faults, which are rather the error of the head, than of the heart, and which may be corrected; and put up with some difficulties, if they are not material. And if, on the whole, he promises to make a profitable minister, you had better obtain him, if you can. A society may let a man go, under the idea of being better suited in some other, and afterwards regret that they did so.

Seek to preserve harmony among yourselves. If you differ in judgment, let it be with mildness and brotherly love ; and condescend to one another, so far as you can do it with a good conscience, and consistently with the good of society.

Depend not on a minister's coming to you ; but get the best information you can with regard to the character of candidates for the ministry ; and send for such a one as can be well recommended.

Do not reject a minister because he deals plainly with you. You ought to like him the better for this. If you think that he speaks in some respects as he ought not to do ; yet, if in the main he delivers the truth, and is anxious to do you good, do not condemn him on this account ; but consider whether he may not be a more profitable minister than one who never disturbs his hearers with any thing grating to their feelings.

When a minister comes among you, treat him with all that kind attention and respect which becomes his office ; this will endear you to him, and encourage him in his work.

It is your duty to provide means, and to exert yourselves for the upholding of a preached Gospel, as much as if all depended on yourselves. At the same time, you must realize that a good Gospel minister is one of Christ's ascension gifts ; and you must go to him in prayer, petitioning that he would give you a pastor after his own heart. You cannot get such a one without *Him* ; and, therefore, you must go to him, who holds the seven stars in his right hand, and ask him to give you one.

I would advise you by all means not to think of living by hiring a minister for a few months at a time. In this way you cannot have that interest in him, nor he in you, which you would mutually have, if he were settled with you.

Frequent changing of ministers is not the way for a people to become regularly instructed in the system of doctrine taught in the word of God. One minister may have his peculiar views of Gospel doctrine, and another may have different views ; and in this way people may be confounded, rather than instructed. But allowing different ministers to preach the same sentiments, a part of the people may be for this man,

and another for that man, and hence may arise divisions which may be fatal to the support of the Gospel.

You have long been destitute of a settled minister, but you have not had in the time much of a variety of preachers; and it would be well if you have not for the future, but that you have a good Gospel minister settled permanently with you.

According to the common course of nature, I must soon go the way of all the earth; but I should rejoice to see you furnished with an able, godly, prudent, and faithful minister, before my departure.

This day calls up to my mind reflections of the most solemn and interesting nature. I have been engaged through the greater part of my life in the most important work that was ever assigned to mortal man. In view of the work of the ministry, well might the Apostle exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things?" I entered upon it with fear and trembling, feeling my own insufficiency. I have not been so devoted to my calling as I should have been, if I had not been necessitated to provide for myself and family the means of subsistence, over and above my little salary;* but I have striven to fulfill my ministry, and I hope that I have done it in some good measure.

I am reminded that I must soon give account of my stewardship, and if I am not approved of God, it will be of no account if I am approved of men.

Those who have sat under my ministry, must also give account how they have improved the instructions they have received from my lips, agreeable to the word of God. You, my friends, must do it.

When I have instructed and warned you from the sacred scriptures, and the truth has commended itself to your consciences, in the sight of God; if you have gone away and disregarded it, how can you answer for so doing, when you come before the judgment seat of Christ?

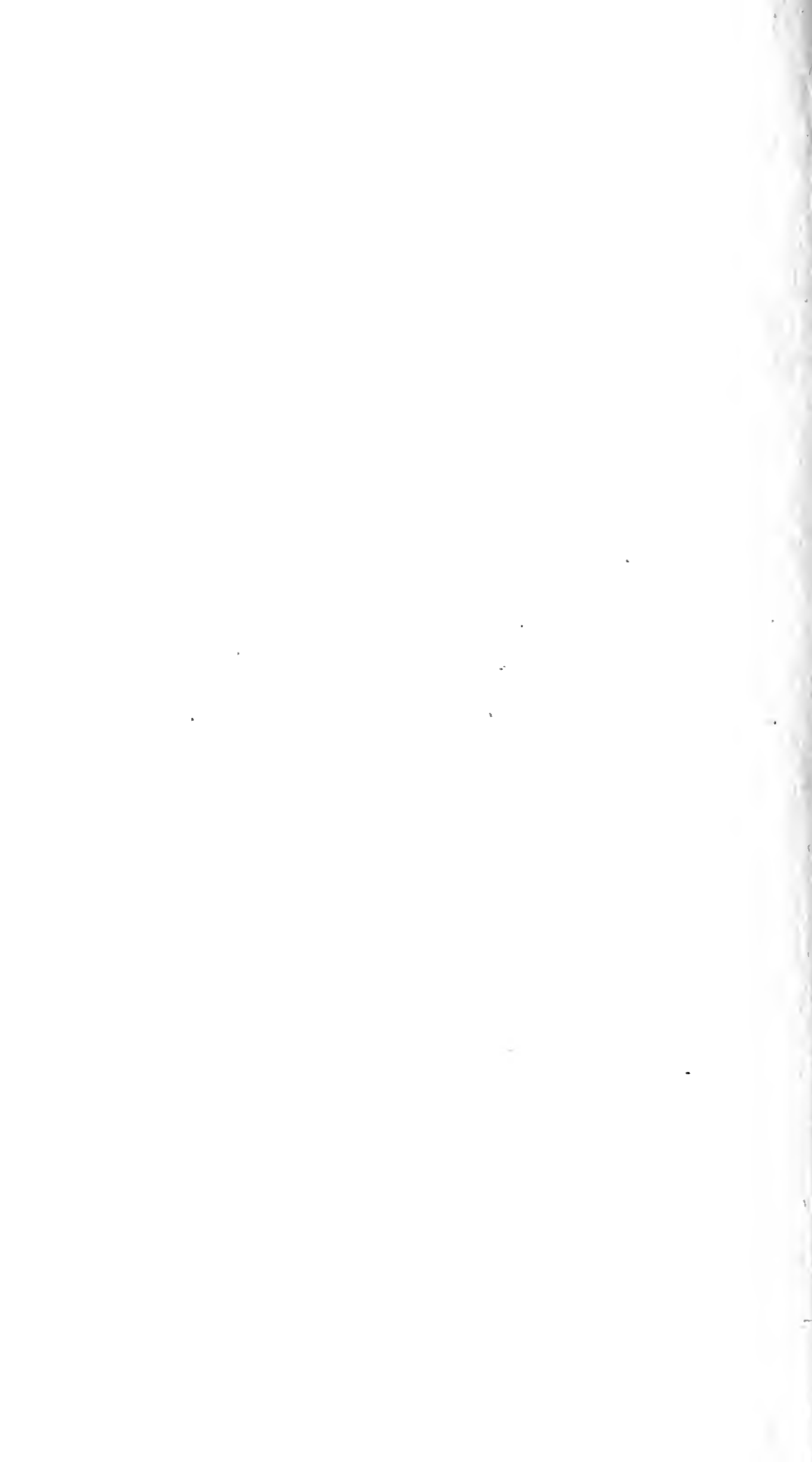
* My salary was originally \$250, and forty loads of wood, then worth \$1.00 per load, and it was never raised. I had nine children, and eight of them lived to grow up.

It is a most solemn and affecting thought, that we must meet there, and be witness for, or against each other. O that we may rejoice together, that my labor for your good has not been in vain in the Lord!

Whether I shall ever preach again in this pulpit on any occasion, is altogether uncertain. I feel this to be my farewell sermon.

Standing, as it were, on the threshold of eternity, in the name of my Lord and Master, I once more exhort you to give all diligence, that you may be found of your Judge, in peace, when he shall come to be glorified in the saints, and to be admired in all them that believe! (2 Thess. i. 10.) Amen.





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