DR. FLINT'S SERMON AT THE ORDINATION OF DR. ANDREWS

1802

John C Bray

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Mr. FLINT's SERMON

AT THE

ORDINATION

OF THE

Rev. JOSIAH B. ANDREWS.

A

SERMON,

DELIVERED AT THE

ORDINATION

OF THE

Rev. JOSIAH B. ANDREWS,

TO THE PASTORAL CARE

OF THE

SECOND CHURCH IN

KILLINGWORTH,

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Pastor of the South Church in Hartford.

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A SERMON, &c.

ACTS xxviii. 31.

Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence,——

THE apostle Paul was distinguished from the other apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the ardor of his zeal, by the abundance of his labors in the service of his great master, and by the cruel persecutions he met with from the enemies of the Christian cause. Impressed with a lively sense of gratitude to God, for interposing, in a miraculous manner, to bring him to a knowledge of Jesus Christ and of the way of salvation through him, he devoted his life to the propagation of that glorious system. To an object so momentous he sacrificed all that the world calls dear, his ease, his interest, his reputation, and in the end life itself. This illustrious child of wisdom triumphed in the midst of persecution;—he gloried that he was accounted worthy to suffer for the cause of Christ; and desired to spend and be spent in disseminating that religion which is in fact, and which he firmly believed to be "the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth."

DEEPLY impressed himself with a sense of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, he wished to be made instrumental of communicating this knowledge to others; and therefore, he improved

every opportunity afforded him "to teſtify the goſpel of the grace of God." Undaunted by the fear of perſecution, unmoved by the threatenings of his enemies, undiſmayed by the proſpect of bonds and impriſonment, which he knew awaited him, he ſtill perſevered in preaching a crucified Saviour to Jews and Gentiles.

Having, in the diſcharge of a commiſſion entruſted to him by his great maſter, incurred the reſentment of the Jewiſh rulers and people, they would have barbarouſly murdered him, had he not been protected by the Roman troops then ſtationed at Jeruſalem. Being permitted to ſpeak in his own defence, he delivered an eloquent apology for himſelf, ſtating what had been the manner of his life, and giving a hiſtory of his miraculous converſion to the Chriſtian faith, with an account of his ſubſequent conduct. The Jews ſtill perſiſting in their enmity, exhibited a number of charges againſt him before the Roman governor and inſiſted upon his condemnation. In conſequence of this, the apoſtle, thinking it his duty to uſe all lawful means to preſerve his life, claimed thoſe privileges to which he was entitled as a Roman citizen, and appealed from the tribunal of the Roman governor in Judea, to the judgment of Cæſar. He was accordingly ſent as a priſoner to Rome. Having arrived in that city, divine Providence ſo ordered it, that inſtead of being caſt into a priſon he was permitted to reſide in his own hired houſe guarded by a ſingle ſoldier. Here Paul "received all thoſe who came unto him; preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching thoſe things which concern the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, with all confidence."

From the hiſtory of this apoſtle, contained in the book of Acts, and from his epiſtles, which form ſo important a part of the canon of the new teſtament, we learn that our text contains, in few words, the great ſubjects which St. Paul thought it his duty,

as a miniſter of Chriſt, to inculcate on thoſe to whom he was ſent to preach the goſpel. He uniformly preached *the kingdom of God*, and *the things concerning Jeſus Chriſt*. And this he every where did with *great confidence ;* boldly declaring the whole counſel of God, that the blood of thoſe ſouls to whom he diſpenſed the everlaſting goſpel might not be required at his hands.

As God is immutable, without any variableneſs or ſhadow of turning, the truths of his holy word will forever remain the ſame ; and it will ever be the duty of Chriſtian miniſters to preach the ſame ſyſtem of doctrines and precepts which was taught by the great apoſtle of the Gentiles ; and in imitation of him to preach them "with all confidence." There is but one goſpel,—but one way of ſalvation ; and tho an angel from heaven were to preach another goſpel than that preached by Paul, a ſolemn curſe is denounced againſt him. How important then that the miniſters of Chriſt preach the truth ! How important that they take for their pattern thoſe primitive teachers who were immediately inſpired by the Father of lights and commiſſioned by him to proclaim to mankind the only way of ſalvation ! How important that "we preach not ourſelves but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord !"

The attention of this numerous and reſpectable audience is requeſted, while I recommend to my Reverend Fathers and Brethren, and particularly to my young Brother, who is this day to be ſolemnly conſecrated to the work of the goſpel miniſtry, the example of the apoſtle Paul, as mentioned in the words of our text.

The paſſage contains three leading ideas which I ſhall endeavor to illuſtrate and apply to the preſent occaſion.

I. It is the duty of Chriſtian miniſters to "preach the kingdom of God."

II. It is their duty to "teach thofe things which concern the Lord Jefus Chrift."

III. It is their duty to do this "with all confidence."

I. In the firft place, It is the duty of Chriftian minifters to "preach the kingdom of God."

"The kingdom of God," or "the kingdom of heaven," is a phrafe which frequently occurs in the holy fcriptures, and it is ufed in different fenfes. Sometimes it denotes God's univerfal kingdom, or that dominion which he exercifes over all the works of his hands—as—that expreffion of the Pfalmift, "They fhall fpeak of the glory of thy kingdom and talk of thy power; to make known to the fons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majefty of his kingdom. Thy kingdom is an everlafting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations." By the kingdom of God is fometimes meant a principle of true religion feated in the heart;—as, "The kingdom of God is not in word but in power." "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteoufnefs and peace and joy in the holy ghoft." "The kingdom of God is within you."—Sometimes the phrafe denotes the Chriftian difpenfation, in diftinction from the Jewifh—as—where John the Baptift fays—"Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And fometimes, "the kingdom of God," means that ftate of glory and bleffednefs into which the righteous will be admitted in a future ftate of exiftence; as in our Saviour's difcourfe with Nicodemus,—"Except a man be born again he cannot fee the kingdom of God."

As underftood in all thefe fenfes, the kingdom of God is to be preached.—Under this general idea are comprifed many particulars, fome of which will be briefly mentioned.

A TRUE knowledge of God is the foundation of all religious truth. If on this ſubject the ideas of men are eſſentially wrong, their whole ſyſtem of doctrines will be erroneous. Faithful miniſters will, therefore, endeavor often to delineate the true character and perfections of the ever bleſſed God, as theſe are diſcovered in the works of creation, in the diſpenſations of providence, and particularly in that revelation which God hath made of himſelf; together with the mode of the divine exiſtence in a trinity of perſons, ſo far as this myſterious ſubject is opened to the comprehenſion of men in the holy ſcriptures.—They will deſcribe the ſeveral relations which man ſtands in to God, as his creator, preſerver and judge, with the various duties reſulting from thoſe relations. They will inculcate the doctrine of God's univerſal and particular providence, in fulfilment of his eternal decrees, foreordaining whatſoever comes to paſs; and that the divine being will over-rule all things to the advancement of his own glory, and the greateſt good of his intelligent univerſe.—They will deſcribe that holy, juſt and good law, which is a tranſcript of the moral perfections of its divine author, and which all rational beings are under infinite obligations always to obey; with the perfectly reaſonable penalty annexed to the violation of this law; and the certainty of this penalty's being inflicted on finally impenitent tranſgreſſors. This will lead them often to ſpeak of the general reſurrection, of the day of judgment and that future ſtate of retribution which is to ſucceed. They will delineate the character of the true ſubjects of God's ſpiritual kingdom in this world, and the glories of the heavenly kingdom, ſo far as they are unveiled in the ſacred volume. They will conſequently be often led to deſcribe true religion as conſiſting in holy love,—ſupreme love to God, and univerſal benevolence to man;—acted out in a life of uniform obedience to the divine precepts.

In a word, preaching the kingdom of God denotes preaching that ſyſtem of religion which God hath revealed. The bible is the great ſtandard of truth and duty. From that ſource are to be derived our articles of faith and rules of practice. To the law and to the teſtimony muſt we ever appeal for the truth of our religious ſentiments; and not to the dictates of reaſon corrupted by paſſion and biaſſed by prejudice.

Those therefore who inſtruct their hearers only in what is called the religion of nature, and in the ſyſtems of morality taught by uninſpired men;—who omit, or but ſlightly and ſuperficially diſcuſs the peculiar truths of divine revelation, and who do not enjoin thoſe graces of the heart and thoſe moral virtues which diſtinguiſh the Chriſtian religion from all others, do not imitate the apoſtle Paul, and are not faithful ſtewards of the myſteries of the kingdom of God.

But reſerving to the next general head of diſcourſe ſeveral particulars which it might ſeem proper to introduce under this head, I paſs on to obſerve,

II. It is the duty of Chriſtian miniſters to "teach thoſe things which concern the Lord Jeſus Chriſt."

To preach Chriſt is to have a general reference to him in all religious ſubjects; in conformity with the ſcope of divine revelation, and with the preaching of the primitive apoſtles.—The work of redemption is the moſt glorious of all God's works; indeed the others are but appendages of this. The true character of God is ſeen only as it ſhines in the face of Jeſus Chriſt; and thoſe truths and doctrines which have been already mentioned cannot be rightly underſtood and explained without reference to Chriſt. "We preach Chriſt crucified," ſays St. Paul, "to the Jews a ſtumbling block, and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs; but to them that are called, both Jews and

Greeks, Chrift the power of God and the wifdom of God. I determined not to know any thing among you fave Jefus Chrift and him crucified." In Chrift as a central point, all the lines of evangelical truth meet and are united. Suffer me, to afk your attention to a quotation from an elegant writer on this fubject.

" Jesus Chrift, far fuperior to all human glory, " was known and celebrated long before he came " into the world. His magnificence is of all ages. " The foundations of his religion were laid with " thofe of the world ; and tho he did not appear " on earth till four thoufand years after the creation, " yet his hiftory begins with that of the world. He " was firft preached in Paradife ; the fubject was " continued down to Mofes ; and revealed ftill more " frequently and more clearly during the reign of " the law and the prophets. For four thoufand " years Jefus Chrift was the object of the promifes of " heaven, and the defires of the earth ; he was ty- " pified by righteous men and by the worfhip of the " law ; he was proclaimed by a long train of pro- " phets, and his way prepared by the whole chain " of political events.

" Jesus, above all, Jefus crucified, throws the " brighteft light upon the old teftament. Without " him what can we comprehend in the multitude of " ceremonies and facrifices of the law ? What ima- " ges without him do the lives of the patriarchs offer ? " What can we find in the prophecies but impene- " trable enigmas ? The law would be a fealed book, " and Judaifm a confufed heap of precepts and cere- " monies, piled up without meaning. On the con- " trary, how beautiful is the hiftory of the people of " God and all their worfhip when the crofs is the " key !—What order !—What defign !—What " plan !—What an admirable economy !—It is one " whole, the different parts of which relate to the " fame end. It is an edifice which God himfelf

"founded, and insensibly raised, with a design of "placing upon the top the cross of his Son. It is a "long allegory which divine wisdom contrived and "conducted during many ages, and of which, at "length, the cross has given the true sense."

So full are the holy scriptures of Jesus Christ, and so important is it that his ministers have an ultimate reference to him in all their discourses. Having made these general remarks respecting preaching Christ, I proceed to mention several particulars concerning him which faithful ministers of the gospel will inculcate.

They will insist upon the original dignity and glory of his nature, as one with the Father in every adorable attribute of divinity; as the second person in the holy trinity; and as mediator uniting in himself the divine and human natures, being God and man in two distinct natures and one person. They will mention the various circumstances of his incarnation, his birth, life, sufferings, death, resurrection and ascension; together with the offices which as mediator he sustained. And they will explain all those doctrines which relate to the way of salvation through him.

Were I at this time to go into a particular detail of all the Christian doctrines, and attempt to illustrate and prove them, I should far exceed the proper limits of a single discourse, I shall therefore only mention a few leading fundamental doctrines.

1. In the first place, the universal and total depravity of mankind. The whole system of Christianity is evidently grounded on this idea, that mankind are in a fallen, degraded, depraved state; to recover an elect number of whom from which was the design of the mission of Christ. The more deeply we feel our depravity, the greater sense we have of our exceeding sinfulness, and the conse-

quent miſery to which we are expoſed, the higher will our ideas riſe of the importance and worth of the Chriſtian ſalvation. While thoſe who do not believe mankind to be totally depraved, can never thoroughly underſtand nor duly appreciate the way of redemption through Chriſt. "In ſuch as have "never felt their ſins as any incumbrance, it would "be mere affectation to pretend to very exalted con-"ceptions of the value and acceptableneſs of the "proffered deliverance."

2. Another eſſential doctrine of the goſpel, which faithful miniſters will preach, is, that Chriſt by his ſufferings and death expiated the ſins of the world; that he ſuffered and died not as a martyr to the truth, but to make a vicarious atonement for ſin; and that this atonement conſiſted not in obedience to the divine law but in ſuffering its penalty in the ſinner's ſtead.

In the death of Chriſt there was an infinite value and merit. It afforded a diſplay of the moral perfections of God, and diſcovered the evil nature and conſequences of ſin more ſtrikingly than if the whole human race had been left to ſuffer the penalty of God's righteous law. This is the uniform language of the new teſtament, in which the doctrine of the croſs is repreſented as the grand peculiarity of Chriſtianity. This doctrine is deſcribed as being not merely an important branch of the goſpel but the goſpel itſelf; and it is repreſented as ſo eſſential that the final ſalvation of the Corinthians was declared by the apoſtle to be ſuſpended upon their adherence to it.

Those who deny or explain away the doctrine of human depravity, and thoſe who, from inattention to the ſubject, or from not examining themſelves, have faint ideas of their ſinful and miſerable condition, ſee no neceſſity of ſuch an atonement, and therefore do not really believe the doctrine as ex-

plained in the holy ſcriptures. The conſequence is, their whole ſyſtem of ſentiments as regards ſalvation by Chriſt is erroneous. To counteract ſuch errors and inculcate the truth, the idea that Jeſus Chriſt, by his death and ſufferings, purchaſed ſalvation for ſinners, and that ſalvation is in no other way to be obtained, ſhould be often held up to view.

3. Again, the neceſſity of divine influences to renew and ſanctify the heart, is another eſſential doctrine of the goſpel. This neceſſity ariſes from the depravity of the human heart, which is ſo great that if left to himſelf man never would become holy. A great variety of expreſſions are uſed in the ſcriptures on this ſubject, and the idea inculcated by them is, that a moral change muſt take place in man to fit him for the happineſs purchaſed by the death of Chriſt; and that this change is effected not by any power in man, but by the operation of the holy ſpirit of God; who, in this reſpect, acts as a ſovereign, having mercy on whom he will have mercy.

Christ, by his death, has expiated ſin; he has ſatisfied the law of God, and made it conſiſtent with the honor of the divine government to pardon the ſinner. But notwithſtanding this, no one of the human race could be happy were not God, in his ſovereign mercy, to change the heart, and thus fit the ſinner to receive a pardon and to enjoy happineſs, which can reſult only from the exerciſe of a holy temper.

The different parts of the goſpel ſcheme harmonize with each other. Chriſtianity views man as a ſinful and as a guilty being. As ſinful it holds forth the idea of divine influences to renew him and make him holy; as guilty it directs him to a Saviour who has died for him, and ſuffered the penalty of ſin on his account. Thus is the goſpel, what the word itſelf imports, a meſſage of glad tidings.

THE doctrines which have been mentioned as fundamental and essential to the Christian scheme, may be considered as comprising the whole system. In discussing these points, faithful ministers will bring up to view the various ideas necessarily connected with them. They will describe the nature of sin and wherein the depravity of the heart consists. They will often speak of the various blessings purchased by Christ, and particularly describe that faith by which believers are united to Christ, and made to participate of the blessings purchased by him, and that repentance towards God which is said to be unto life. They will dwell much upon experimental religion, describing the progress of the divine operation in awakening, convincing and converting the sinner, and carrying on a progressive work of sanctification in those who are ordained to eternal life. This will lead them frequently to explain and inculcate the various graces of the Christian life; to hold up to view the character and privileges of believers, and thus to lead them to self examination, that they may not deceive themselves with a false hope.

THEY will also exhort their hearers to the practice of every moral virtue; and enforce the idea that the law of God, tho no longer a covenant of works, is still binding as a rule of life; and that any pretensions to faith without sincere repentance for sin, real holiness in the heart, and an external conformity to the moral precepts of the scriptures, are fallacious.

TIME will not permit me to go into a further detail of the doctrines and precepts of our holy religion. I have endeavored briefly to hold up to view that system of truths which appears to me to be contained in the word of God, and which therefore I think it the duty of Christian ministers to explain and inculcate. I may have omitted some things which many of my hearers may deem essential and important truths; and I may have noticed others which may

be thought leſs important. All religious truth muſt be examined by the word of God. What will not bear that teſt muſt be given up. To the volume of divine revelation let a candid appeal be made.

On the general ſubject of preaching Chriſt, I would further obſerve, that faithful miniſters will make the advancement of his kingdom and the ſalvation of men the great aim of their preaching. "We preach not ourſelves," ſays our apoſtle, "but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, and ourſelves your ſervants for his ſake." All ſelfiſh, private conſiderations muſt be ſacrificed, to the promotion of that glorious cauſe for which the bleſſed redeemer quitted the boſom of his father, ſuffered, bled and died. The miniſters of Chriſt muſt not ſeek their own glory, but the glory of him who ſent them. "The glory of God, and "the ſalvation of man are the great and good ends "of the paſtoral office; and he who loſeth ſight of "theſe, may acquire the reputation of a learned, an "ingenious, or an eloquent orator, but cannot be "ſtiled a preacher of Chriſt."

Finally, my brethren, to recur back to an idea mentioned in a preceding part of this diſcourſe, thoſe miniſters who take the apoſtle Paul for an example, will have a continual reference to Chriſt in all their preaching. In every age thus to preach Chriſt hath been the means of convincing and converting ſinners, and of building them up in holineſs and comfort through faith unto ſalvation. It was the obſervation of a judicious and pious writer on this ſubject, "That where a great and univerſal neglect of preaching Chriſt hath prevailed in a Chriſtian nation, it hath given a fatal occaſion to the growth of infidelity: for when people have heard the ſermons of their miniſters for many years together, and find little of Chriſt in them, they have taken it into their heads that men may be very good, and go ſafe to heaven without Chriſtianity; and therefore though they dwell in a land where the goſpel is profeſſed, they

imagine there is no need they ſhould be Chriſtians. To which I may add, that it is no leſs obſervable on the other hand, that wherever there has been any revival of religion, it has uniformly been introduced and carried on, through the bleſſing of God, by preaching the peculiar doctrines of Chriſtianity. Theſe, and theſe alone, have been, and ever will be, the wiſdom and power of God unto ſalvation."

A FEW remarks will be made upon the third general idea ſuggeſted in our text :

III. IT is the duty of Chriſtian miniſters to preach the kingdom of God and to teach the things concerning the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, " with all confidence."

THE apoſtle Paul, tho a priſoner in Rome, and ſent there on account of his preaching the truth, boldly perſiſted in teaching the ſame ſyſtem of doctrines. Feeling the force of divine truth on his own mind, he reſolutely determined to inculcate this upon others, whatever might be the conſequences as reſpected himſelf. No danger deterred him, no perſecution reſtrained him, no ridicule diſcouraged him. He knew he had been called to preach Chriſt, and looking to his great maſter for grace to help him, he, " with all confidence," went on in the diſcharge of his duty.—Thoſe who ſucceed him, as diſpenſers of the everlaſting goſpel, ſhould imitate him not only in the ſubject of their preaching, but in their zeal and boldneſs in the cauſe of the Redeemer. Though not like him expoſed to open perſecution, yet many temptations will be thrown in their way to induce them to ſuppreſs truths ſo mortifying to the pride, ſo thwarting to the corrupt propenſities of ſinners as are many doctrines and precepts of the goſpel. Againſt ſuch temptations they muſt be on their guard, and not ſhun to declare the whole counſel of God, whether people will hear or forbear. They muſt contend earneſtly for the faith once delivered to the

ſaints, and boldly and reſolutely inculcate the truth, unawed by the ſcoffs of the libertine or the cavils of the ſceptic. The cauſe in which they are engaged is the cauſe of God, and he that is for them is greater than thoſe that are againſt them.

In the diſcuſſion of points which are rather ſpeculative than eſſential, or of thoſe intricate and myſterious ſubjects which are not to be fully comprehended by the human underſtanding, a prudent care ſhould be taken not to give needleſs offence. That harſhneſs of expreſſion and ſeverity of recrimination, which tend to irritate the minds of men, and prejudice them againſt the truth, ſhould be carefully avoided. Our bleſſed Saviour, when he firſt gave a commiſſion to the twelve diſciples to preach the kingdom of heaven, told them not only to be harmleſs as doves, but alſo to be wiſe as ſerpents. There is ſuch a thing as miniſterial prudence, which is not at all incompatible with a bold, manly and open avowal of eſſential truths. Theſe truths are never to be ſacrificed to gain temporary applauſe from men who love darkneſs rather than light becauſe their deeds are evil.—Let Chriſt, let the doctrines and duties of his religion be preached "with all confidence," at the ſame time, in that diſcreet manner which ſhall be beſt calculated to win men over to the belief of the one and the practice of the other.

Having finiſhed what I propoſed by way of illuſtration of the text, I ſhall now proceed to apply the ſubject.

1. From that view of ſcripture truth which we have now taken we learn the ſuperior excellency of the Chriſtian religion.

Well might St. Paul ſay, he counted all things but loſs for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus; and well might he declare that he was not aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt.—No other ſyſtem

of religion gives ſuch juſt and rational ideas of the divine character; no other ſo truly deſcribes the character of man, his preſent condition and the connection between the preſent and a future ſtate of exiſtence;—no other teaches on what terms God can pardon ſin, nor are any intimations given of ſuch a Saviour as man needs except in that volume which, tho deſpiſed by many, contains the only knowledge which can make man wiſe to ſalvation. All the truths of the bible are important, becauſe they relate to the happineſs of our eternal exiſtence. If we give up theſe truths we ſhall wander like blind men without a guide till our feet ſtumble on the dark mountains and plunge us into endleſs and remedileſs woe. "Lord Jeſus, to whom ſhall we go? Thou haſt the words of eternal life."

2. We learn from our ſubject what great obligations of gratitude we are under to the Father of lights for bleſſing us with the light of divine revelation.

How different is our ſituation from that of a great part of mankind, who are ſtill wrapped in midnight darkneſs with regard to religion? They know not the God who made them; they are ignorant of a Saviour and of a future ſtate of exiſtence: While on all theſe deeply intereſting ſubjects, we have the means of acquiring information. Let us remember who hath made us to differ; let us be truly grateful to God for his goodneſs to us, and be careful to improve the privileges we enjoy that it may not hereafter be our condemnation that light came into the world and that we loved darkneſs rather than light, becauſe our deeds were evil.

3. The ſubject to which we have been attending is particularly applicable to the ſolemn yet joyful ſervices of this day.

We have aſſembled in the ſanctuary of the Lord for the purpoſe of conſecrating his young ſervant to

the work of the gofpel miniftry, and of ordaining him to the paftoral care of this church and fociety. Important is the work to which he is to be feparated; arduous are its duties; yet great are the encouragements to the faithful difcharge of thefe duties. Deeply interefting alfo are the tranfactions of this day to this people. They are to have fet over them in the Lord a fpiritual guide to preach to them the truths of the everlafting gofpel, and adminifter to them in holy things. May he be made a favor of life unto life to each individual, and not of death unto death to any one.

My Dear Brother,

You are about to be confecrated to the work of the evangelical miniftry, by prayer and the impofition of the hands of the prefbytery. To this work I truft you are alfo called of God, elfe thefe public ceremonies will be of no avail. We can give only an external commiffion; the real qualifications for the work muft come from a power infinitely fuperior to man. Your duty, as regards the fubjects on which you are to preach, together with the general manner of your preaching has been, tho in a very imperfect manner, fet before you. Permit me again to turn your attention to it. You are to preach the religion of the bible in diftinction from the fyftems of uninfpired men. You are to preach Chrift, to have a general reference to him in the difcuffion of all religious fubjects; to inculcate the peculiar doctrines and duties of his religion; and to make the advancement of his caufe your great aim. You are to proclaim the truth with all confidence, at the fame time with prudence, that you may be faithful to your own foul, and the fouls committed to your care. In the difcharge of your office you muft expect to meet with many trials and difficulties; remember that your fufficiency is not of yourfelf but of God, and that he hath promifed his grace fhall be fufficient for you. Look therefore to him; be a man of prayer; afk for wifdom from above; and as a faithful foldier of Jefus

Chrift, feek directions from your great captain ; obey his orders, and exert yourfelf boldly in his caufe. May your days be many and profperous ; your labors fuccefsful ; your improvements confpicuous and perpetual ; your ufefulnefs extenfive ; and your reward glorious in the kingdom of your Father where they that be wife fhall fhine as the brightnefs of the firmament, and they that have turned many to righteoufnefs as the ftars for ever and ever !

Brethren of this Church and Society,

As it will be the duty of him who is about to be ordained you paftor, with all confidence, to preach to you the fyftem of divine truth revealed in the holy fcriptures, fo it will be your duty to hear that fyftem and to receive it in the love of it. Permit me to remind you, that the condemnation of thofe to whom the truth is preached, who yet will not receive it, will be defervedly greater than that of thofe who do not enjoy fuch privileges. We truft that he whom you have chofen to take the over-fight of you in the Lord, will endeavour faithfully to difpenfe to you the gofpel of Chrift. May you long rejoice in his light, and be profited and edified by his miniftry. Efteem him highly in love for his work's fake ; conftantly and diligently attend upon his miniftry, with minds open to conviction, and with hearts difpofed to receive inftruction. Affift him by your prayers ; comfort him under his trials ; give him every encouragement and fupport in your power, and may you be each other's crown of joy and rejoicing in the prefence of our Lord Jefus at his coming !

My Hearers,

What hath been at this time delivered may ferve to teach us what kind of preaching we ought moftly to value. By many, at the prefent day, the great and effential truths of the gofpel are too little regarded. Like the Athenians of old they require fomething new, fomething that may gratify an itching ear, and

furnish matter for a vain imagination to work upon. Would you be made wise unto salvation? Then cordially embrace the doctrines of Christ. Be not merely nominal Christians, believing, in a vague, indistinct sense in Christianity, because it is the religion of the country in which you happen to live; but be the real followers of a crucified Saviour. Look to him as a prophet for instruction; look to him as a priest to make atonement for you; look to him as a king to rule in your hearts by his spirit, and as entitled to the service of your lives. And may he be made of God to each one of us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. AMEN.

THE CHARGE,

By the Rev. CYPRIAN STRONG,
of CHATHAM.

Dear Sir,

YOU being now ſeparated to the work of the evangelical miniſtry, by PRAYER and the laying on of the hands of the PRESBYTERY, and ordained the Paſtor of the Church of Chriſt in this place: And, being authorized to preach the everlaſting goſpel, to periſhing men—to adminiſter the ordinances of *Baptiſm* and the *Lord's Supper*—to aſſiſt in ordaining Elders—to diſpenſe diſcipline, and to take the lead in the Church of Chriſt;—and, in in a word, to perform the whole work of a goſpel miniſter:

We would now charge thee, before God and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt—before the holy Angels and this aſſembly, that thou be faithful in the diſcharge of all the duties of your ſacred office, as a miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt.

Particularly, we charge thee, to "take heed unto thyſelf," and keep thy ſoul diligently." Look well to the ſtate of your ſoul, and ſee thou to it, that it be adorned with all the graces of the Divine Spirit—that the love of God, of Chriſt and the ſouls of men, be the governing principle of all your conduct. Feel thy dependance on the grace of God; and give thyſelf much unto prayer.—Study the ſacred ſcriptures with great diligence and conſtancy; and make them your directory in your private walks and public adminiſtrations, as well as the ſource of your comforts and conſolations. On the one hand, be very zealous in maintaining and ſupporting the important truths of the goſpel; and, on the other, be careful to exerciſe a due degree of meekneſs and benevolence, towards ſuch as oppoſe it. In a word, be an example to the flock of Chriſt; and

exhibit that zeal and benevolence which ſhone ſo conſpicuouſly in the conduct of our bleſſed Redeemer; that others may take knowledge of you, *that you have been with Jeſus.*

AGAIN: *Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prayer, with the laying on of the hands of the preſbytery. That thy profiting may appear unto all. Take heed to thy* DOCTRINE. Let it be pure, uncorrupted and expreſſive of the plain truths which are recorded in the goſpel. Uſe great *plainneſs of ſpeech;* and avoid the *enticing words* of man's wiſdom. Preach and explain, with great plainneſs, not only the gracious *promiſes* which Chriſt has made, for the comfort of his own people; but enforce the awful and dreadful *threatenings* which he hath denounced, for the awakening of ſinners.

IN the adminiſtration of the ordinances of BAPTISM and the LORD'S SUPPER, ſee to it, that it be to ſuch only as are the proper ſubjects. Making a diſtinction between the *holy* and *profane*, that the temple of God be not defiled.

IN the exerciſe of thy miniſterial truſt, in ordaining Elders over the Churches, ſee to it that thou art faithful, and exerciſe the greateſt wiſdom and care. *Lay hands ſuddenly on no man.* Commit the miniſtry to ſuch men only, as in a judgment of charity, are men of knowledge, experience, a holy life, and are the lovers of Jeſus and the ſouls of men.

IN the exerciſe of diſcipline in Chriſt's houſe, do thou manifeſt a moſt ſacred *impartiality;* not *preferring one to another*, nor *lording it over God's heritage.*—Be thou in all things, *an example to the believers, in word, in converſation, in charity, in ſpirit, in faith, in purity.* In doing theſe things, *thou ſhalt both ſave thyſelf and them that hear thee.*

We, eſpecially, charge thee, *to take heed to the flock over which the Holy Ghoſt hath made thee an overſeer.* Watch over it with diligence, feed it with the ſincere milk of the word; and in all things, be thou an example to it. Exhort *the aged to be grave, ſober, temperate, ſound in the faith, in charity, in patience. Young men, likewiſe, exhort to be ſober minded.*

Dear Brother, remember that you muſt render a moſt ſolemn account to the Chief Biſhop of ſouls, for the improvement you make of the miniſtry, which you have now received of the Lord. Prepare to meet Him with exceeding joy. The important deſigns of your miniſtry, the influence it will eventually have on the concerns of your own ſoul, and the conſequences which will follow, reſpecting the ſouls of this flock, are worthy of your conſtant and moſt ſerious conſideration. It will be but a little while, before the connexion between you and this people will be diſſolved, by death; and every thing prepared for a moſt ſolemn meeting at the bar of Jeſus Chriſt.—Be thou faithful unto death. If thou keepeſt this charge, which we commit unto you, unrebukable unto the end; when the Chief Shepherd ſhall appear, you may be aſſured, that you ſhall then receive a crown of glory, which ſhall never fade away.

Now unto Him, who is able to keep you from falling, and to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we aſk or think; unto Him be glory in the Church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. AMEN.

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP, &c.

By the Rev. DAVID SELDEN.

THAT the Miniſters of the bleſſed Jeſus may advance the glorious deſign of their divine miſſion, it is highly neceſſary, that they cultivate Chriſtian love and unity;—that they live in fellowſhip with one other, and with the whole houſehold of faith; that thus they may ſtrengthen each other's hands, and encourage each other's hearts, and do honor to their Divine Maſter. As a teſtimony of their Chriſtian fellowſhip, the ſcriptural practice of giving the right hand, hath ever been obſerved at ſolemnities like the preſent—a practice in its own nature of friendly import, and expreſſive of the greateſt cordiality and affection. Therefore, in compliance with the deſire of the Ordaining Council, I now welcome this our Brother into the vineyard of Chriſt. Reverend Sir, *Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? If ſo, give me thine hand.* By this token, we receive you into the chariot of the goſpel miniſtry; and certify our cordial approbation of you, as a fellow laborer in the vineyard of our great Lord.—We aſſure you of our readineſs to aſſiſt you, and to be aſſiſted by you in our common employment. We commit and commend you, dear brother, with the Church over which the Holy Ghoſt hath made you overſeer, to the allwiſe care and protection of the great head of the Church. We pray that you may be ſtrong in the grace, that is in Chriſt Jeſus; that you may be perfect, thoroughly furniſhed unto all good works, and abundantly ſucceſsful, that when your faithful labors ſhall terminate on earth, you may receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

We rejoice with you, brethren of this Church, in the bleſſings of this auſpicious day. Rejoice in this man of God, whom you have choſen, and who has [illegible] ſolemnly ſet over you in the Lord. Eſteem

him highly in love, for his work's ſake.—Aſſiſt, encourage, and ſtrengthen him in the important duties of his office.—Under his faithful miniſtry, may your ſouls proſper and be in health.—May you be fed with ſpiritual knowledge and underſtanding.—May the houſhold of God grow in purity and holineſs.—May ſinners be awakened, convinced, and converted to the Chriſtian faith and practice. And at laſt, *may you all come unto Mount Zion and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jeruſalem, and to an innumerable company of Angels : to the general aſſembly and church of the firſt born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to Jeſus the mediator of the new covenant.*