



Mr. *West's*
S E R M O N
At the O R D I N A T I O N
O F

Mr. *Samuel West.*



CHRIST *the grand Subject of the Gospel Ministry.*

A

S E R M O N

Preached at the ORDINATION

Of the REVEREND

Mr. Samuel West,

To the Pastoral Office over the Church of CHRIST
in *Needham.*

April 25th 1764.

By SAMUEL WEST, A.M.

Pastor of the Church in *Dartmouth.*

To which are annexed,

The CHARGE by his Father, the Reverend Mr.
THOMAS WEST, of *Rochester.*

And

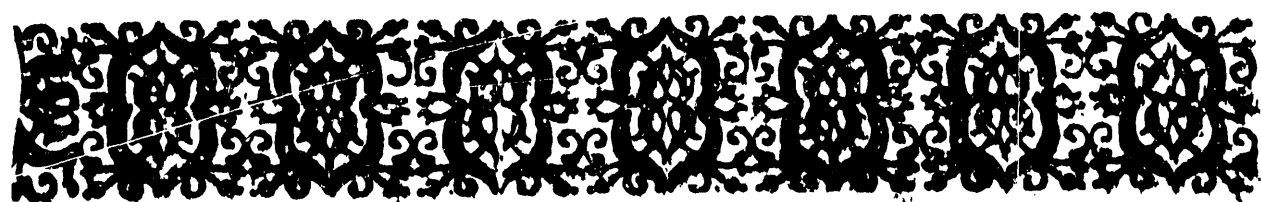
The RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP, by
the Rev. Mr. *BALCH*, of *Dedham.*

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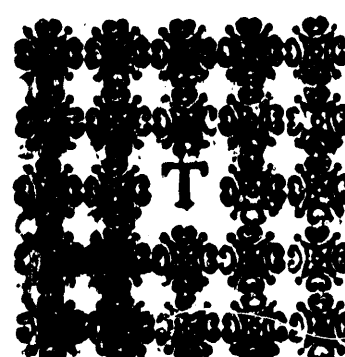
A N

Ordination S E R M O N.



I Cor. 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 great work and business of a gospel minister, is to teach the christian religion, and to lead men to a right understanding of the method of salvation, contained in the gospel of Christ. In order to which, it is necessary that he should become acquainted, with all such things as have a direct tendency to illustrate the doctrine of a crucified Saviour ; or that are necessarily connected with this important article of religion. The main point that a pious minister has in view, is to promote the *knowledge of the true*

*true God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent ; as the way which leads to eternal life. . . All his studies are to be made subservient to this grand end. . . Whatever interferes with it, is to be rejected. 'Tis acting out of character for a gospel minister to seek popular applause alone, or to strive only to get a name for wisdom, knowledge, or eloquence. It is enough for him, to approve himself unto God ; a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. A view to promote the glory of God, and happiness of mankind, is the principle that ought ever to animate him, to the discharge of the trust reposed in him. He ought to esteem the divine approbation more than all the honours, profits and applauses of mortals. One that is convinced of the importance of the christian religion ; and who makes it the ultimate end of his preaching, to promote the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom ; will with the apostle Paul in our text, come to his people, not with excellency of speech, with the vain pomp of language, or with great appearance of human wisdom, when he declares unto them the testimony of God : for he will determine not to know (or concern himself ; not to make known) any thing among them, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. The sense of which text may be expressed in the following paraphrase of the excellent Dr. Doddridge : .— “ When I first
“ came among you, I came not with the pomp of lan-
“ guage or wisdom, with the laboured charms of
“ eloquence or philosophy, for I remembered
“ that I was declaring unto you no human inven-
“ tions,*

“ tions, which needed or admitted such orna-
 “ ments or recommendations, but was exhibi-
 “ ting the *testimony of God* to a plain fact, for
 “ which I produced authentick evidence ; by
 “ visible divine operations. I therefore deter-
 “ mined to exhibit it in as intelligible a way as
 “ I could ; and treated it as one who believed
 “ that it really came from God ; and so needed
 “ not the varnishing of human art ; *for I was*
 “ previously *determined* in mind, that fond as I
 “ knew you were of refined speculations and
 “ polite address, I would appear *to know* and ap-
 “ ply my self, to make known *nothing among you*
 “ *but Jesus* as the *Christ*, the great promised
 “ Messiah of the Jews ; *even that crucified person*
 “ against whom so many scandals are raised ;
 “ yet did I resolve steadily to maintain the doct-
 “ rine of his cross, and endeavour to exalt it’s
 “ honour wherever I came, not excepting their
 “ opulent and polite city.

According to this we see that the apostle was
 so sensible of the importance of christianity,
 that he had no desire of being esteemed for any
 other kind of knowledge ; the whole point he
 had in view being to illustrate the doctrine of a
 crucified Jesus, in the best manner he could.
 His whole ambition was to preach the gospel of
 Christ in its native purity and simplicity, avoid-
 ing that parade of words and shew of learning,
 which tends to obscure rather than to set in a
 just light the true faith of Christ. And as this
 is what should be the great concern and study
 of ministers, in every age of the church, to preach
 pure

pure christianity, without those affected ornaments of rhetorick, which only serve to amuse the mind, and draw it off from the simplicity of the gospel. So from our text we may learn these useful truths.

I. That a gospel minister should carefully avoid using in his Sermons, too pompous a stile, and too many refinements in speculation, lest he should obscure the truth.

II. That he should make it the grand business of his life to make known the doctrine of a crucified Redeemer in the clearest manner that he is capable of.

i. That a gospel minister should carefully avoid using in his Sermons, too pompous a stile, and too many refinements in speculation, lest he should obscure the truth.

To abound in too luxuriant and affected a diction, and to run into scholastick niceties, is far from being a likely method to promote the knowledge of christianity, it having a natural tendency to lead the mind off from the purity and simplicity of the gospel. Too much paint and varnish hinder the truths of the gospel from shining out in their genuine lustre and brightness. Hence the Apostle says, *that Christ sent him to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.* By this and the like phrases we are not to understand, that the christian religion is not a wise and rational institution, or that it is incapable of

of the ornaments of a true and manly eloquence; for it would be absurd to suppose, that the father of lights and the fountain of all wisdom and knowledge, should authorize any constitution that was not in it self wise and rational; and that this could not be the sense of the Apostle, is plain from what he says, *Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect—the wisdom of God in a mystery.* Nor was it the Apostle's design to depreciate any kind of eloquence that could serve to set the important doctrine of the gospel in a true light; for it has been observed by learned men, that the apostle *Paul* was himself an *orator* of the first *rate*, and made as much use of true eloquence as almost any preacher whatever, and that in his writings which are left us, may be found almost every figure of the most perfect oratory, us'd with the utmost propriety and beauty: but what the Apostle calls the wisdom of words, and condemns as having a tendency to *render the cross of Christ of none effect*; are those several kinds of false eloquence, which serve to amuse and mislead, instead of informing and improving the understanding; such as serve rather to obscure than illustrate the doctrine of the gospel: such is an affected diction, abounding with *great swelling words of vanity*, and those pompous high-flown metaphors, which under the pretence of containing some very sublime mysteries and profound sense, are only a jingle and play of words, containing little or no meaning in them.

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This stile pretends to aim at the highest wisdom and the most refined knowledge; but when we come to strip off it's false glare, and hunc down these unnatural metaphors, the great appearance of sublimity and fine sense vanishes into smoke. Nor can we find any thing to pay us for our trouble, unless it be a consciousness of having undeceived a few honest minds, that have been dazled and blinded by this false lustre. This is the common fault of enthusiasts; and men of too warm an imagination, who fancying to themselves that they have frequent communion and fellowship with God, imagine their understandings are illuminated far beyond the rest of mankind. This prompts them to use the mystical language which they mistake for good sense and sublime theology; and to abound in a sort of unmeaning cant and jargon; whereby they amuse themselves & others, with airy phantoms of their brains; which exists nowhere but only in their over-heated imagination; and under a notion of deep mysteries, and sublime divinity, they ridiculously fall into the greatest absurdities imaginable.

Now any sober man upon the least reflection, may discern that the knowledge of Christ can never be promoted in such a manner as this, but on the contrary, that it has a direct tendency to *render the cross of Christ of none effect*, by obscuring the truths of the gospel, and instead of pure christianity, presenting us only with the reveries of an over-heated imagination. And as this extream should carefully be avoided by every

very gospel minister, so should every thing that verges too much toward it. Such are all those kinds of false rhetorick, that serve only to amuse the minds of people, but not to instruct them. Such also is that kind of fustian, that only displays the luxuriant imagination of the speaker, but does not clear up any important truth of the gospel.

Of this kind, are mere addresses to the passions ; without taking any care to inform the judgment and understanding : for a great deal of heat without any light can never answer the end of true religion ; which being a reasonable service, ought always to be treated in a rational manner. Not but that when the mind is fully convinced of any truth, it may be very proper to engage the affections and excite the passions. For doubtless they should be engaged on the side of religion. Nor is there any danger that our affections will be too much excited to religion, so long as they rise only in proportion to the conviction of the judgment. Let a preacher be but assured, that those to whom he preaches, are sufficiently convinced of the truth, reasonableness, and importance of the point, he has in view, and then let him address them in the most pathetick manner he is capable of. But to set their passions to work when the judgment and understanding are not convinced ; is only a turning religion into a mere piece of mechanism. But a mechanical & irrational religion, can never come from that God, who is the author of all intellectual light, and the source of right reason.

Mechanical fervour, and an irrational devotion, can only be proper for irrational beings ; and such as are not endowed with understanding and common sense. The same may be said of those who abound in nice and refined speculations ; such as barren points of controversies, dry and critical observations, or philosophical disquisitions, or any refinements in divinity, which do not level to the capacities of the hearers.

Of this kind are the fine-spun cob-webs of metaphysicians, which have occasioned many disputes among christians to no purpose. How many will contend with the utmost earnestness about a parcel of nice scholastick phrases, as if they were the grand points of religion, when either they are only about a set of vague and insignificant terms, being words without ideas, or mere verbal contentions ; or if there is any real difference, 'tis meerly speculative, and such as does not affect practice, or else about something left doubtful and ambiguous in scripture, or of such a nature, that we have not faculties sufficient to determine on which side the truth lies, or at most of but small importance to religion and the souls of men : yet these are often contended for, in such an ill-natured and unchristian manner, as greatly to disturb the peace of churches, and to obscure a great many truths of divinity, and much to the hurt of vital piety.

To remedy this evil, the preacher of the gospel should keep close to scripture language. Those words which the Holy Ghost dictateth ;
for

for these are the words most suitably adapted to express spiritual things, and to convey to our understandings, the sublime and glorious truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ, in the clearest manner. When we use scripture words, we may discourse of divine things with the greatest propriety and exactness, and shall most eminently advance others in true piety and goodness.— Not that we should be so very scrupulous as on no occasions whatever, to make use of any words about religious matters, which are not to be found in scripture ; for it may so happen, that we shall in some cases be obliged to use tedious circumlocutions to express our minds, unless we make use of unscriptural phrases.

But what is chiefly intended, is that we should not unnecessarily introduce a set of vague and undeterminate unscriptural terms ; that we should stick to the language of inspiration as close as we can with conveniency ; and that those unscriptural terms, whose meaning is doubtful, and apt to lead people astray ; should be omitted. The apostle *Paul* has guarded us against this distemper, *2 Tim. ii. 14. Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord, that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.* Had men minded this of the Apostle, and been careful of *subverting their hearers* by their verbal contentions and logomachies, they had prevented an infinite deal of mischief, that has been done to the christian world. This distemper arises from pride, a desire not to seem ignorant of any thing ;
has

has put men upon coining a set of unintelligible phrases, which at first view seem to carry a shew of learning and wisdom ; but when examined to the bottom, mean nothing ; being entirely vague and insignificant. Hence the apostle *Paul* says, *If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words—he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, which cometh of envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth.* A desire to appear wise and knowing, to gain popular applause, seems to be the principal occasion of men's running into this error : and where one is afraid of a rival, it occasions *envy, strife, railings, and evil surmisings.* It is an aiming at an exaltation of one's self, contrary to the Apostles practice, *2 Cor. iv. 5. For we preach not our selves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and our selves your servants for Jesus sake.* To make one's self the end of preaching ; to be in pursuit of popular applause, or to appear wholly desirous of being esteemed and caressed by mankind, as wise, eloquent and learned, is frustrating the great end of preaching, and forfeiting the character of a good minister of the gospel of Christ ! 'Tis true, there is great danger of ministers being infected with this distemper, when their hearts are not seasoned by divine grace, nor are animated with the noble and generous views of doing good to the souls of men. Can such a minister be expected to *preach Christ Jesus the Lord ? Will he not rather be constantly preaching himself,*

himself, aiming wholly at his own honour and advantage? He that acts from these low and base views, will endeavour to serve a turn by suiting the taste of his hearers.

Thus, if they are enthusiastically inclined, it will not be strange if he should pretend to extraordinary illuminations and communion with the divine being: if they affect politeness, he will endeavour to become a modish and fashionable preacher, and when any schemes of divinity suit the taste of his people, he will insist wholly on them; however contrary they may be to the gospel: if they are filled with a spirit of sectarism; then such a preacher will be continually harping on the peculiar tenets and distinctions of the party.

But this leads me to observe,

II. That a gospel minister should make it the grand business of his life, to make known the doctrine of a crucified redeemer in the clearest manner he is capable of.

That the work and business of a gospel minister, is to teach men the way to salvation, is what stands in need of no proof; that he should make it the grand business of his life is plain, both from the nature of his office, and from scripture. See 2 Tim. ii. 4. *No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.* 1 Tim. iv. 13, 15. *Till I come give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine—meditate upon these*

these things, give thy self wholly to them ; that thy profiting may appear to all. The plain import of which is, that a gospel minister should make divinity his principal study, and that he should not pursue any other business, that may interfere with the care of souls ; and with studying to preach the gospel in the purity of it. His mind should be well stored with the knowledge of divinity, and the desires of his soul ought to be for the promoting of the gospel of Christ : he should be acquainted with the spirit and genius of christianity, and possessed of every endowment whereby he may recommend the religion of Jesus, and bring men to a thoro' acquaintance with the doctrines of the gospel. He should teach both by doctrine and example, and consequently should be possessed both with love to God, and the great Redcemer : for can he who is not transported with the charms of virtue and piety, be likely to set forth the amiable nature of holiness and true goodness, in such an engaging manner, as to excite mankind to the pursuit of it ? will he be likely to discover to others that pure joy and tranquility of soul, that results from the harmony of pious and devout affections, who has never discerned any thing in himself but those tumultuous and discordant passions that naturally arise from a vitiated and depraved mind ? will he recommend vital piety and the glories of a crucified Jesus, with that fervency and genuine simplicity that becomes a gospel minister, who has not a lively and realizing sense of these things upon his own mind ? Be-

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sides will he not be too apt to neglect the interest of Christ's kingdom, and be pursuing his own interest and the approbation of mankind? will he be able to bear up under the reproaches and trials that some times a gospel minister is exposed unto? When he sees the wolf coming, will he not flee and leave his flock; and be apt many ways to hinder the progress of the gospel? For whatever mask he may put on, still the corruptions of his heart will be apt to discover themselves. Hence our Saviour says to the apostle *Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?* and upon his affirming that he did, he says, *feed my lambs.* Not but that one who is not thoroughly religious, may be possessed of very eminent talents for learning and knowledge, and be capable of doing great service to the cause of religion: for the validity of gospel administrations depends not on the grace of the administrator; for God has not bound himself by any promise that he will never bless the administrations of unregenerate men, or that he will never use such as instruments for spiritual good to others. But he that is possessed of love to Christ, is far likelier to be serviceable to the souls of men; because it is more natural to suppose that he will exert himself in the cause of Christ; and that it will be more easy for him to recommend religion in its genuine simplicity and purity both in his preaching and conversation, than for him who is destitute of virtuous and pious principles

One who is convinced of the importance of religion and vital piety, and is animated by religious views, will make divinity his great delight and his main study; his constant endeavour will be *to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ*; which he will esteem as the most valuable and useful knowledge in the world; it will be his great concern to cultivate it in his own mind, and to propagate it in the clearest manner to others. He will esteem the *holy scriptures* as every way sufficient to make the man of God perfect in christianity, and thoroughly furnish him for every good work. This sacred depositum he will esteem as the rule of life, the measure and standard of moral actions; as such he will make it his principal study to find the will of God therein contained, that he may conform his heart thereunto: being possessed of a fair and honest mind, he will ever be desirous of truth, and disposed to embrace it, wherever he discovers it. Being truly pious and vertuous, he will not be led into any dangerous errors, from that enmity and opposition to truth, arising from corrupt and depraved affections. He has too noble a soul to be frightened from the truth, because it is contrary to the popular or fashionable divinity of his day. He will embrace and preach up pure christianity, even when men *cannot bear sound doctrine*. As he is not prejudiced against the truth from education, passion or interest; so he will not wreck and torture the scriptures, to make them favour his own darling notions. On the contrary, he will have no sentiments of
christianity.

christianity, but such as he derives from his bible ; which he will be always disposed to construe in it's most obvious sense, that it is capable of : a rule, which if put in practice faithfully, would soon put an end to a variety of disputes and controversies among us. Upon any article of faith, he is not determined by the great names of Fathers, Synods, Councils, or any human Authority whatever : he is not so anxious to know what is the opinion of this or the other divine, as to know what are the dictates of the word of God. Tho' ready to use the labours of pious and learned divines, he considers them only as the writings of fallible men, and cannot rely on them as the standard of truth. In composing discourses for his people, he does not so much consider, how this or the other sentence will be applauded by men, but how he may best edify the souls of his hearers. He seeks not for that eloquence which will serve only to recommend him to the approbation of mankind, but that which will best enable him to recommend the religion of Jesus Christ : He insists most on those doctrines which are of greatest importance ; he considers all those things as grand branches of christianity, which tend to inspire men with motives to piety and virtue, to promote true humility and meekness, to beget just ideas of Jesus Christ, and the gospel method of salvation, and that afford us the rightest notions and conceptions of the ever blessed God : in short, he considers christianity not as a meer speculation, but as a scheme wisely adapted by God to

promote the spiritual and everlasting happiness of mankind ; he values every sentiment of divinity in proportion to its tendency to make men wiser and better ; all persons differing from him in nice and abstruse points, if they have the same pious and practical views, he esteems as true christians. He who is possessed of such a noble and generous soul ; will understand many things in religion which perhaps some more knowing, but less honest persons, would stumble at : This man is properly prepared to *preach Jesus Christ and him crucified* ; which intends something more than often using his name in a vague and unintelligible manner ; for it must imply preaching up the person and offices of Christ : as the Son of God, who was sent into the world to purchase eternal redemption for us ; as the great prophet designed to instruct us, in the way to happiness : as our high priest who offered himself up to God a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the world : and as the king and head of the church ; who is to rule and govern us. He is to be preached up as the only Mediator between God and man, thro' whom alone we must find acceptance : that he came to redeem us both from the penal consequences of *Adam's* first transgression, and from all the sins of our lives, by purchasing a resurrection to immortal glory and happiness. To preach Jesus Christ and him crucified, must mean the preaching up whatever has any tendency to illustrate that great article of christianity, or that is implied in it. He that omits preaching any thing,

thing, that is any ways connected with, or that will serve to throw any light upon, or, to increase our knowledge of, the doctrines of the gospel, is not a good and faithful minister of Jesus Christ : and this will be found to extend to, and to take in, all that we can know of true religion from reason or revelation : for he that is ignorant of any thing that appertains to religion and piety ; so far may be said not to know Christ ; for how can any one understand who Jesus Christ is, in the gospel sense of it, unless he knows him to be the Son of God, sent into the world for the salvation of sinners ? But can any one know this without an acquaintance with the being and perfections of God ? Can any one understand what is intended by Christ's coming to save sinners ; without understanding what sin is, and the contrariety thereof to the moral perfections of the divine nature ? or can this be understood without knowing the relation we stand in to God, as his creatures, and the obligations thence arising to keep his commandments ? Can we have any regular conceptions, how Christ has redeemed us from sin, without being instructed in the doctrine of a future state, or rewards and punishments, the resurrection of the body, and general judgment ? Can we know Jesus Christ without being taught, that through his atoning blood and perfect righteousness, we are to receive the remission of sin and eternal life ? Can we understand the redemption of Christ and the application thereof, without an acquaintance with the office of the Holy

Holy Ghost, to renew and sanctify us? Can we have a rational knowledge that Jesus is the Christ, without discerning the evidences of true christianity?

So that to preach Christ is, to preach the whole system of divinity, as it consists of both natural and revealed religion. That minister cannot be said to preach Christ faithfully, that does not endeavour to cultivate and set in a clear light all those truths, that may be discovered by reason and scripture; that can serve to make men wiser and better. Thus the apostle *Paul*, when he preached the faith of Christ, reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come: and can any minister think that he has faithfully preached Christ, who has only amused his hearers with a great deal of unintelligible cant and jargon, and has not endeavoured to discover to them the nature and perfections of God, that so their devotions might be regulated according to the standard of truth, and not be depraved by unworthy conceptions of the all perfect Deity. Has the preacher discharged his duty, that takes no care to shew his people, the obligations they lie under, *to live sober, righteous and godly lives*; or that has never explained and insisted upon the several branches of social virtue and benevolence? How can he expect ever to make christians of his hearers, if he has omitted things of such great moment and concern? or can he imagine that men will understand these things, without having them taught and strictly enjoined? Can he expect that they should practice them,

them, if they are only mentioned, under the disadvantageous character of pagan morality ; and not in the stile of the apostle *Paul* ; as *the fruits of the Spirit* ; or if he ever mentions them as duties, does it with so many salvo's and clogs, as if he was not fully convinced that it was safe to practice them ? or at most, as if he imagined them only the mint, anise and cummin of the gospel ? or is any one afraid to mention these things, because not agreeable to the modern scheme of orthodoxy ? or does he omit them, lest he should be branded with the odious name of heretick ? Shall this justify any one in not *delivering the whole counsel of God* ? On the other hand, can any one think, that he has faithfully discharged the trust reposed in him, who insists altogether on what is called natural religion, without ever mentioning the peculiar doctrines of revelation ? Why should we *seperate what God has joined together* ? Can we expect that sinners should ever return to God with all their hearts, unless we shew them the necessity of divine grace in order thereunto ? Can any say, that there is any absurdity in supposing that the divine Being may strengthen & support our faculties in the search of truth, that he may impress upon our minds a lively sense of divine things, excite us to piety, & dissuade us from sin, rectify our corrupt affections & depraved appetites, &c.

If this be not absurd, then may God thus work in us *to will and to do of his own good pleasure* : as both scripture and reason testify : and on a little reflection we shall see the necessity of divine assistance

assistance our selves. Why then should we not largely insist upon it ? Can any imagine that he faithfully preaches Christ, who very seldom in his discourses mentions his name ; and who never insists on the doctrine of atonement, with which the new testament so much abounds ? Shall gospel ministers leave out the principal end of Christ's coming into the world, because it is not agreeable to the modish and fashionable method of preaching ? Where the doctrines of meer natural religion are insisted on to the neglect of the peculiar doctrines of revelation ; we can at most expect to find only a few fashionable, civil gentlemen, but destitute of real piety. As on the other hand, where the distinguishing doctrines of christianity alone are insisted upon, we shall find that men are very apt to run into enthusiasm. A true gospel minister should seek to avoid both these extremes. When he insists on moral virtues, he should enforce them on christian motives. He should preach up the perfections of God, to regulate our devotion ; the doctrine of atonement and regeneration, to bring us to Christ, and social virtues as the effects of a christian temper. This seems to be preaching Christ in the gospel sense, and consequently whoever varies from it, so far varies from the standard of pure christianity.

Thus have I gone through what was proposed.

There are several useful Reflections that might be made upon what has been said ; but
having

having sufficiently tired your patience, I shall wave them, and conclude with proper Addresses.

And,

i. To the young Gentleman, now to be ordained.

Dear Sir, At your desire I now stand in this place ; permit me then to say : The business you are now entering upon, is grand and important ; it is *to preach Jesus Christ, and him crucified* ; a work in itself most sacred, and in it's consequences of the greatest concern to mankind.

Be careful then that you act from noble and generous views : have a real desire to do good to the souls of men : avoid all ostentation : seek not principally, your own interest or popular applause : These are too low motives for a gospel minister to act upon : beware of too much affectation in your stile : use not the pompous language, that serves only to obscure the pure gospel of Christ, or any refined speculations that tend only to amuse and not to instruct : esteem the knowledge of the christian religion, as the most valuable & important science : make it your main study to lead men to an acquaintance with it : *determine to know nothing among them, save Jesus Christ and him crucified* : endeavour to cultivate in your mind the genius and spirit of christianity : let your heart be ever animated with love to God, and the great Redeemer : *study to approve your self to God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed ; rightly dividing the word of truth.* Be much in prayer to the father of lights, that you may *faithfully discharge the trust reposed in*
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you.

you. And may God grant, that you may be found at last among those that are wise who turn many to righteousness, that you may shine as the brightness of the firmament ; and as the stars for ever and ever.

2. To the Church : *Honoured and Beloved in the Lord : Thro' the goodness of God, you are now about to have a pastor set over you in the Lord : we hope a man after God's own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding. Receive all the truths of the gospel, that he shall preach to you, with honest and upright minds, as the only way to be profited thereby. Esteem the knowledge of Christ as the most valuable knowledge, being that which leads to everlasting life. It is your duty to become acquainted with this knowledge : tho' there are many useful sciences that every one is not bound to learn, but may lawfully be ignorant of without any great disadvantage to himself ; yet the case is not so with respect to the knowledge of christianity ; for none can be ignorant of true religion without hurting his own soul. Be studious therefore to know the true God and Jesus Christ, as the only way to eternal life : and be ye earnest in prayer to God for your minister, that he may always come to you in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace.*

Now may the God of all grace, grant that we may be all found among the number of the blessed ; and may join in singing praises to God and the Lamb for ever and ever.

A M E N.



The CHARGE given by his FATHER,
the Rev. Mr. *THOMAS WEST*,
of *Dartmouth*.

OUR Fathers, where are they? and the Prophets, do they live for ever? No, the ministers of the gospel, (as well as the priests under the law) must die: they are not suffered to continue, by reason of death: Wherefore the wise and good head of the church, hath graciously directed that (by his ministers) a dispensation of the everlasting gospel, should from age to age be committed to faithful men, able also to teach others.

And whereas this dear flock of Christ, have called you, on whom our hands are now imposed, to the pastoral office and work of the ministry among them; and you have accepted their call; we (who are also pastors) being hereunto called of God by this people, do now according to the ancient and scriptural practice of the church, solemnly separate you, to this sacred office, and introduce you, into this great and good work.

And we do now solemnly charge you, O *Samuel* my son! before God and the Lord Jesus, that you take heed to the ministry, which you thus receive in the Lord; to fulfill it. Take heed to thy self, and to thy doctrine, and to all the flock, over which the holy Ghost now makes you an overseer. And O remember my son, that the church of Christ is the purchase of his own blood;

blood ; and therefore from love to Christ, as well as love to souls, feed his sheep and his lambs ; with the sincere milk of his word ; preach the gospel, in it's genuine simplicity and glorious purity : teach this people the good knowledge of the Lord, publickly and from house to house. See that you keep back nothing from them, that may be profitable to them. Shun not to declare the whole counsel of God. Give to every one their portion in due season, rightly dividing the word of truth.

We charge you also, with seriousness, to administer the sacraments of the new testament, viz. baptism and the Lord's supper, at proper seasons to meet subjects : and that what in you lies you ever keep up a godly discipline in the church, according to the word of God.

We do likewise charge you, to be an example to the flock, and even to believers, in word, in conversation, in faith, in charity, and in all purity. Be harmless as the steward of God, not self-willed, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre ; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men : sober, just, holy, temperate ; holding fast the faithful word, that you may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and also to convince gainsayers. Strive not about words which are to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. Shew thy self a pattern of good works, and also a workman that need not to be ashamed.

In this present evil world, you may expect to meet with hard and trying things : but
endure

endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Be not overcome of evil, but ever labour to overcome evil with good. Lord it not over God's heritage, but condescend to men of low estate ; meekly instructing such as oppose themselves, if peradventure God will give them repentance. Let no man despise thee. Preach and practice pure and peaceable principles. Ever make the word of God, the man of your counsel, and beloved rule of your whole ministry and conversation ; and above all things be much in prayer to God. Give thy self unto prayer. Be careful for nothing, but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your request be made known unto God : and then the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your heart and mind, thro' Christ Jesus.

And now, for your further encouragement, remember that Christ, the glorious all-sufficient head of the church, has graciously promised his presence with his ministers, to the end of the world : and if God be for us, who can be against us. Moreover, those that are wise, shall one day shine as the brightness of the firmament : and such as turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.

The Lord assist, accept, and bless thee. The Lord make you wise to win souls, and ever crown your labours with success ; thro' Jesus Christ, to whom be glory everlasting, AMEN.

The RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP,
given by the Rev. Mr. *BALCH*,
of *Dedham*.

MY BRETHREN,

It has, you are sensible, obtained as a practice in the churches of our Lord Jesus in this land, on the day of the solemn separation of a person to the work of the evangelical ministry, and to the charge of a particular flock, to give him the *Right Hand of Fellowship*; which is all that now remains to be done for the completing this solemnity.

This indeed is no essential part of investiture in the sacred office; nor are we able very exactly to determine what might be originally intended hereby in the single instance in which we find it performed by the Apostles, and upon which this usage in the churches is grounded.—Nevertheless we practice this ceremony, as I take it, as a proper declaration of ministerial Friendship and Communion; and as a publick acknowledgment that the person to whom it is given, is agreeably qualified, orderly called, and regularly established in the work of the ministry, and entitled, equally with others, to all that office-power and authority in the church, which Christ has committed to his ministers; such as to preach the word, administer the sacraments of the new testament, and to dispense the discipline with which the house of God is to be ordered and governed. And lastly, as it denotes a mutual engagement of assistance in carrying on the ministerial work, and a joint concurrence in promoting the kingdom and interest of our common Lord.

Wherefore, Dear Sir, you having been called to take the oversight of *this flock*, with which we are now exercising a special act of Communion; and perceiving the grace which God has bestowed upon you, accounting you faithful, putting you into the ministry;
and

and having been witnesses of the solemn Charge you have just now received to the faithful performance of your office ; We do now embrace you as our brother and companion in labour, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.

We acknowledge you in this publick manner as a regular minister of the gospel, equal with us, and partaker of the same holy calling with us.

In token whereof, and in the name, and by the assignment of the reverend Pastors and other Messengers of the several Churches in Council here convened, I give you this Hand, bidding you welcome into the vineyard of the Lord; promising you our regard, esteem and love, not only for your own, but also for your work's sake; signifying to you, that you may expect our best counsel, advice and assistance, in the important work to which you have now been commissioned, desiring and expecting, in our turn, the same of you.

You may particularly depend on our assistance, in helping you with our fervent prayers to the God of all grace for you, and this flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath now made you an Overseer; asking the same of you for our selves and flocks.

And may the presence of God ever be with you; may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ prosper you; and the communion of the holy Ghost, support you; and may the great Master of Assemblies carry you on to a faithful and successful discharge of the various duties of your office, and finally reward you with a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Amen.

With respect to you our beloved Brethren in the Lord, We do upon this occasion acknowlege you a regular constituted church of Christ, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, and members with us of that body which is the mystical fulness of him which filleth all in all.

We

28 *The RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP.*

We congratulate you upon the present smiles of divine providence in the re-settlement of the gospel-ministry among you.

He that walks in the midst of the golden Candlesticks, has remembered you in your late melancholly and bereaved state, has provided for you, and this day bestowed upon you another pastor, in the room of your late worthy and excellent one, who for so many years faithfully served you in your best interests. *

And we trust that *this* your pastor, who is now compleatly vested in his office, is one according to God's own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding. Our wish and prayer is, that for a long course of years, he may come to you in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ, and his ministry be attended with much success.

We hope that nothing will hereafter appear to damp the sacred joys, or sully the beauties of this solemnity.

And we besecch you, Brethren, to know him who is appointed to labour among you, and has now been set over you in the Lord, and is to admonish you, and to esteem him very highly in love for his work's sake. And be at peace among your selves.

Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, thro' the blood of the everlasting covenant, 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 glory for ever and ever.

A M E N.

* The Rev. Mr. *Jonathan Townsend* ---- a sound Divine, and very accurate Preacher, who for more than 40 Years was Pastor of the Church in *Needham*. He deceased Sept. 30. 1762. *Ætat.* 65.