

A

# S E R M O N,

Delivered at ROWLEY, Second Parish,

June 7, 1797.


AT THE  
ORDINATION

OF THE  
REV. ISAAC BRAMAN,

TO THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE  
SECOND CHURCH AND SOCIETY,  
IN THAT TOWN.

---

BY STEPHEN PALMER, A. M.  
PASTOR OF A CHURCH IN NEEDHAM.



Printed at DEDHAM,  
BY NATHANIEL AND BENJAMIN HEATON.  
M,DCC,XCVII.

AN  
ORDINATION SERMON.

---

LUKE xiv. 23.

*And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways, and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.*

THESE are the words of our Saviour, in his parable of the marriage feast. The primary and immediate design of the parable is, to reprove the Jews, for their rejecting the Messiah, and the privileges of the Gospel dispensation.

By the *King*, we are to understand the most high God, by his *Son*, Jesus Christ. The *royal marriage* represents the mystical union, between Christ and his Church; and the type or shadow is infinitely excelled, by the reality. The *supper prepared* denotes the manifestation of the Messiah, together with the privileges and benefits of the christian Church, purchased and bestowed by him, on believers. Those, who were first invited to this feast, were the Jews, God's ancient covenant people. Christ first *came unto his own*, even to the *lost sheep of the house of Israel*. Those in the *highways and hedges* denote the Gentiles, who, in the context, are described as the *poor*, the *maimed*, the *halt*, and the *blind*; and who, at that time, *were without Christ*, being *aliens from the commonwealth of Israel*, and *strangers from the covenants of promise*, having *no hope*, and *without God in the world*. The *servant*, sent by his Lord, to give the gra-

*cious invitation*, may ultimately refer to the prophets under the Jewish æconomy, but more immediately to the apostles, and to christian ministers, in general, under the Gospel dispensation.

For as God governs the natural world by general laws and second causes, so he fulfils his counsels and carries on the work of his grace, by the use of appointed means. To this end, christian ministers are raised up, and ordained, by him.

When Jesus Christ ascended up on high, *he gave*, as a legacy to his Church, *some apostles ; and some prophets ; and some evangelists ; and some pastors and teachers ; for the perfecting of the saints ; for the work of the ministry ; for the edification of the body of Christ.*

Christian ministers are instruments in the hands of Christ, for promoting the peace of his Gospel Jerusalem, and the prosperity of his spiritual Zion. In a qualified sense, they are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech sinners by them, to be reconciled to himself ; or, in the words of the text, they are to *compel sinners to come in.* Hence,

In the sequel of this discourse, we shall endeavour to shew, in what way, and by what means, the ministers of Christ are to *compel* sinners to comply with the terms of salvation. This, of course, will lead us to speak of some of the principal qualifications, which a minister must possess, to enable him rightly and faithfully to execute this office.

This phrase, *compel them to come in*, has been misrepresented and much abused, by superstitious and bigoted men. It has been interpreted by the Church of Rome, as authorizing a spirit of persecution. But nothing can be more foreign from the original and true meaning of it. The *sword*, which Christ uses in subduing the sinner's heart to himself, is that, which *goeth out of his mouth* ; and he has never authorized his disci-

ples to use carnal weapons, in a spiritual warfare. A spirit of persecution directly opposes the mild temper and genius of christianity. It is not only evil and cruel, in its nature ; but wrong and misjudging, in its design. For if it could ever plead, that its object was to convince and to reclaim the erroneous, this object it never attained. “ The inquisition never made the heretic orthodox ; neither did the burning of the sinner’s body ever tend to purify his soul.”

We shall, therefore, offer violence to the word of God, and to our text in particular, if we interpret it, as countenancing, in any degree, the cause of persecution. *Compel them to come in*, in the true evangelic sense, signifies no more, than *earnestly to intreat or persuade*, by the use of arguments and motives.\*

The christian minister is to work upon the human mind, only as a moral agent, and by the impulsive in-

\* The same word is used, Mat. xiv. 22. where it is said, *Jesus constrained his disciples, to get into a ship*, which he did, not by violent measures, but by persuasion. The disciples also used a word of similar import, when they desired Christ, to spend the evening with them, at *Emaus*, Luke xxiv, 29. where it is said, *They constrained him*. But their constraint was by mere entreaty, far from any force or violence. Thus the apostles compelled the Gentiles to receive the Gospel, by persuasive arguments, and by the force of truth recommended by the holiness of the apostle’s lives and confirmed by the evidence of their miracles.

It is painful to turn the pages of history, and read the sufferings of the primitive christians, in the persecutions they endured, *for the word of God, and for the testimony, which they held* ; such as, being crucified, emboweled, burned alive, drawn in pieces, fryed in iron chairs, seared with torches, being put into vessels of boiling oil, wrapped in the skins of wild animals, and then hunted as beasts of the forest. The ten heathen persecutions, from the reign of Nero, to that of Dioclesian, including the space of about two hundred and twenty years, were but little more, than one continued scene of cruelty and blood. But still, God has *not left himself without witness*. Amidst all the flames of persecution, he has supported his Church, suffering neither the malice of men, nor the gates of hell to prevail against it. While the Church has resembled the *bush in its burning*, it has resembled it also, *in not being consumed*.

fluences of moral suasion. He is to *compel* by the force of argument ; by counsels and warnings ; by exhortations and entreaties. He is to set life and death before the sinner ; urging every possible motive, to persuade him to repentance, that he may obtain the one, and to dissuade him from sin, that he may escape the other. He is to instruct him in the duties of christianity ; in the nature, and importance of regeneration, of faith and repentance, of love and new obedience. These are the great terms of salvation ; and in order to enforce the propriety and necessity of them, the christian minister will endeavour,

I. To show the sinner to himself, holding up to his view the guilt and depravity of his heart. Though *God made man upright ; yet they have sought out many inventions.* By reason of our apostasy, *the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. In us, that is in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing. We are dead in trespasses and sins.* We have a *carnal mind, which is enmity against God ;* and, therefore, have become obnoxious to his vindictive justice, and liable to everlasting banishment, both from his presence and favor. These are truths, which the minister, who is faithful to Christ, and to the souls of men, will inculcate and enforce. He will *lay the ax at the root of the tree.* He will begin at the foundation, and endeavour to make the sinner sensible of his guilt, and feel himself undone. He will, therefore, lead him to an acquaintance with his own heart. He will show him how evil it is, in the sight of God ; show him the pride there, which must be humbled, the pollutions, which must be cleansed, and *the plagues, which must be cured,* before it can become *the temple of the living God.*

*The whole need not a physician, but they, who are sick.* The sinner must first be convinced of the evil of his ways, before he can be converted, *to the wisdom of the just.* He must first feel himself lost, before he can see his need

of a Saviour. He must stand condemned, at the bar of his own heart, before he will plead guilty in the sight of God ; and be deeply sensible of his spiritual maladies, before he will apply to the great Physician, for the healing balm of his grace. Under these convictions, he will find, that Christ alone can save him. Hope in the creature, and hope in himself, will now vanish away. He will see the vanity of all his former dependencies ; that on Christ alone he can rely ; on the *Rock of ages* only, he can build his hope, in safety.

To such an awakened sinner, the Christian minister will act the part of a counsellor and of a comforter. He will administer both the directions and the consolations of the Gospel. Taking him by the hand, in a spiritual sense, he will lead him to the foot of the cross ; there point his bleeding soul, to the bleeding Jesus ; and bid him hope in that *blood*, which was shed for the expiation of human guilt, and which *cleanseth us from all sin*. But this leads me to observe,

II. The christian minister will urge the goodness of God, and the compassion of Jesus Christ, as motives to influence and persuade sinners, to accept the offers of salvation.

When we call to mind the goodness of God, in our creation, in making us rational and intelligent creatures ; in giving us powers and faculties, for noble actions, acquirements, and enjoyments ; in making us capable of knowledge and virtue, and of pleasures and delights, both intellectual and moral, how ungrateful and odious must we appear, even in our own view, if, instead of serving and obeying him, we allow ourselves in sin and rebellion against him ! Has he not also been a kind and tender Parent to us, ever since he gave us life ? Has he not clothed and fed us, comforted and supported us ; yea, taken a kind and fatherly care of us ? How then can we be so evil and unthankful, as to dis-

honor his name, and abuse his *goodness*, which ought, and which is designed, *to lead us to repentance* ! Has he not given his Son, to suffer and die for our redemption ? What ignominy and reproach, what pains and agonies, has the Lord Jesus undergone, for our restoration to divine favor ! He was wounded, that we might be healed. He suffered pain, that we might enjoy peace. He died, that we might live. Having purchased a ransom for us, at the price of his own blood, he is now, with all the endearing motives and persuasions which the Gospel contains, inviting us to the arms of his mercy ; to the mansions in his Father's house ; and to the glories and felicities of his heavenly kingdom ; and shall the manifestations of his kindness and love be despised by us ! Instead of accepting his gracious invitations, shall we take pleasure in *doing that abominable thing, which he hateth* ! Blush, O sinner, at the blackness of thy ingratitude, and at the vileness of thy heart ! The effusions of divine goodness, and the infinite condescension and compassion of Jesus Christ, suggest, to every reasonable mind, most powerful and winning motives, to embrace the Saviour, and comply with the requirements of the gospel ; and he, who feels not the influence of such motives, must be callous to natural, as well as moral, sensibility. His heart must be made of adamant, and the tiger must have given him suck.

III. Christian ministers will persuade sinners, by holding up to their view the evil nature and fatal consequences of sin.

Sin not only opposes the glory of God ; but the happiness of the creature. The practice of it, while it fills the bosom with inquietude, strows the path of life with thorns. What satisfaction can there be, in the exercise of evil passions, and in the indulgence of sinful habits ? Do the emotions of anger, malice, and re-

venge, afford peace to the mind ? Do we derive any quietness, from pride and ambition, from avarice and envy ? Can we find any intellectual and moral pleasure, such pleasure as the soul loves, in profaneness and wantonness, in sensuality and intemperance ? Can the mind, in the hour of cool reflection, enjoy any true satisfaction, from cheating and lying, from defrauding and stealing ? In short, is there any real delight to be taken, in committing evil, or in doing wrong ? There may be a kind of barbarous and brutal satisfaction, in thus doing ; but there can be no rational, or pure mental, pleasure, in such actions. On the other hand, perplexity and pain necessarily attend evil practices. We may as well attempt to *gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles*, as expect to find any true enjoyment, in the ways of vice. Are not shame and dishonor, trouble and wretchedness, the natural effects of sin ? Nothing is more true, than that divine declaration, *The way of transgressors is hard*. There is a numerous train of physical and temporal evils, attending a vicious course. The pleasure of sin lasts no longer, than while we are committing the act ; and even then, we often find bitterness. But no sooner is the act over, than reflection begins to plant a sting in our bosom, by reason of which, *there is no peace to the wicked*. What can equal, in pain and anguish, the compunctions of guilt, preying, like Prometheus' vulture, upon the very vitals of the soul ? The evil consequences of sin, in regard to the present life, may be urged, as no small argument, to dissuade sinners from their evil courses. For it is a dictate of common prudence, to shun and avoid that, in future, which we have once experienced to be painful and pernicious. But we are not to stop here. The pains and sufferings of vice, in the present world, to the impenitent sinner, are but the beginnings of sorrow. There is a dreadful hereafter, a

never ending state of punishment, beyond the grave.

The torments of hell, therefore, may be held up to the sinner, as a most powerful motive, to persuade him to comply with the terms of salvation. The torments of hell, my hearers, are not the dreams of a wanton imagination, nor the extravagancies of fancy. They are awful realities, founded in the word of God. In this sacred volume, they are represented to us, by those things, which are most painful to our feelings, and shocking to our senses; by *the gnawing of the worm, that dieth not*; by *weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth*; by *being cut asunder, cast into outer darkness, or into a lake, that burneth with fire and brimstone*. But all these representations, descriptive as they are, fall short of giving us a true and adequate conception of the punishment of the wicked. For it cannot be fully represented, either to the senses or imaginations of men. What enhances, what dreadfully enhances, this punishment is, it is eternal. This we infer from the express and positive declarations of the word of God, where the perpetuity of future punishment is asserted as plainly, as language can make it; and for conviction, we need but turn the sacred pages. Is never ending misery, then, the doom of impenitent sinners? How dreadful in thought! But more dreadful in experience. O eternity! Thou vast gulph, which absorbeth all our conceptions. No measures can trace thy bounds. No numbers can compute thy duration. Millions of ages are but a blank, in comparison with thee. Let the impenitent sinner think of the future punishment of the wicked, and seek for an interest in *Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come*; and surely, christian ministers, thus *knowing the terrors of the Lord*, in imitation of the apostles, will *persuade men*. But,

IV. Not only the odious nature and pernicious consequences of sin are to be held up to the sinner, as a

dissuasive from an evil course ; but, on the other hand, the joys and rewards of virtue may be urged, as a motive, to influence and persuade him to duty.

Religion is a compound of all, that is excellent and amiable. Mild and benevolent in its nature, it breathes peace and pleasantness to all, who love and practise it. It softens our temper, regulates our affections, and harmonizes the soul. It gives joy to our minds, goodness to our actions, and beauty to our character. While it affords inward peace, it disposes us to live peaceably with our neighbor ; to do good ; and to be useful in the world. Being good in its nature, it is uniformly good and happy in its effects. *Its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace.* The exercises of religion afford a double satisfaction to the mind, arising not only from a pleasing sense of having discharged duty, but from the amiableness of the exercise, in itself. For a virtuous sensation is always a grateful and a pleasurable one.

What are the emoluments of vice, what are all the gratifications of sense, in comparison with that satisfaction, which arises from a consciousness of doing right ? There are charms in innocence, which we cannot behold, without loving ; and there is a luxury in doing good, which he, who has once tasted, cannot but wish to taste again. What pure and refined pleasure must a virtuous and peaceful mind experience from itself ? *A stranger intermeddleth not with the joy.* It is a foretaste of heaven, and such as angels know. He, who lives in the enjoyment of his own mind, has no occasion to seek for external delights. He has a feast at home, in his own breast ; a resource there, whence he can derive the purest satisfaction ; a satisfaction, which this world can neither give nor take away. This inward enjoyment will enhance all the blessings of prosperity ; and, in the suffering scenes of life, it will

draw out the sting of adversity, and gently alluage the wound. It is more than a balance for outward losses and disappointments. Though we be destined to feed upon *the bread of adversity and the water of affliction*, in regard to outward things; yet, while this inward peace remains, it will support us, and, in a true and dignified sense, we may still rank among the happy. In short, it will smoothe and beautify the path of life before us, “blunting its thorns, and spreading its roses.” What is of the greatest importance, it will enliven our hopes, and fill our minds with comfort, in the near views of death. For, *if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.*

Here, therefore, we may call up to view the future *recompense of reward*. For we are not to confine the joys and blessings of virtue to the present life. The good man enjoys but a small part of his happiness here below. When his days on earth shall be numbered and finished, he shall enter upon a blessed immortality, and wear an unfading crown of glory, in the heavenly world. Various are the expressions, used by the sacred writers, to represent the joys and felicities of the blessed state above. It is called, *a kingdom, a crown of glory, an inheritance, the paradise of God*. The blessedness of the saints is further described, by *wearing white robes*, by *resting from their labors*, by *keeping a Sabbath*, and the like. These expressions, borrowed from earthly things, represent the heavenly world, as affording all the honors and enjoyments, which even the enlarged soul can desire. But in vain do we attempt to describe the joys of heaven. For, *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things, which God hath prepared for them, that love him.* “It requires perfection, to describe what is perfect;” and none can decypher the *arcana* of the heavenly kingdom, but those, who are admitted there, and be-

hold the glories and enjoy the blessedness of it. The greatest earthly comforts are but shadows and faint resemblances of the joys above. Hence, let sinners be persuaded to make their peace with God, and to *lay up for themselves a treasure in heaven.*

V. Ministers are to improve special occasions, and favourable opportunities, to make serious impressions, on the sinner's mind. There are certain seasons and times, when the mind is more tender, than at others ; and consequently, in a better state to receive divine instructions. The outward circumstances of people often contribute to seriousness of heart. When people are brought into trial and affliction ; when their earthly prospects are darkened, and providence has frowned upon their temporal affairs ; they are naturally led to reflect upon the vanity of worldly things. This is a favorable opportunity for the minister, to direct their thoughts to a *better, to an heavenly country.* Are they bereaved of dear relatives, or beloved friends ? The minister will take occasion, from such bereavements, to remind them of the uncertainty of life, and of the necessity of their own preparation for death. He will counsel, as well as comfort them, under their trials. While he attempts to assuage the aching wound, with the consolations of the Gospel, he will endeavour to impress the heart, with the duties of it. Are they visited with sickness ? Here the minister will find their minds, in a degree, disengaged from worldly cares, and at leisure to attend to serious things. It is a just observation, that we are never so virtuous, never so much disposed for religious meditation, as in time of sickness. The thoughts are then naturally engaged, in spiritual concerns ; and the faithful minister will improve the opportunity, for religious instructions, and for serious uses. Many have been reclaimed by adversity, who have been hardened by prosperity. In try-

ing and afflictive scenes, in the house of mourning, and in the chamber of sickness, religious impressions are more easily, and often more deeply, made; and, therefore, the christian minister will faithfully improve such occasions, for such purposes.

Having thus, in a cursory manner, shown in what way, and by what means, christian ministers are to *compel sinners to come in*, or to comply with the terms of salvation, we are now of course, led to mention some of the principal qualifications, which a minister must possess, to enable him rightly and faithfully to execute this office. And we observe,

1. That he must be a man of genius, or of good mental powers. We do not say, that a person is disqualified for this office, if his talents be not of the first magnitude, and of the most brilliant kind. What we assert is, that the powers of his mind should be decent, and not below mediocrity. A person of a slender capacity may be more useful, in some minor employment. The work of the ministry is a great and arduous work; and not only *fidelity*, but *wisdom*, is requisite, in *the servant, whom his Lord maketh ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season*.

A minister has to confront the prevailing prejudices of men against the truth, and to defend it, in opposition to infidels and gainfayers; and, therefore, he should be able to reason ingeniously and conclusively. He has to instruct the ignorant, in the nature and importance of divine things, and, of consequence, he ought to have a clear mind, and a sound judgment, that he may form right conceptions, and make accurate distinctions. For, otherwise, he will be liable to misrepresent the doctrines and duties of the Gospel, to mistake falsehood for truth, and thereby lead his hearers into error. He ought to be capable of becoming well acquainted with the holy Scriptures, that he may re-

move apparent difficulties, and maintain the harmony and consistency of the sacred writers. He, who inculcates the duties of christianity, should be capable of understanding them, that he may explain with clearness, and enforce with energy. He ought to be able to satisfy the minds of reasonable and serious inquirers. Besides, a minister has, in his instructions and exhortations, to accommodate himself to the different capacities, and to the various tempers and humors, of people ; or, in a qualified sense, he has to become *all things to all men* ; and this, surely, requires prudence and discretion.

Again ; it is a matter of consequence, that a minister possess, not only a sound judgment, but a copious and lively imagination ; that the manner of his instructions may be pleasing, as well as the matter of them important. A lively fancy, guided by discretion, is a very useful qualification, in a gospel minister, who has to address the passions, as well as the understandings, of men. Duties and virtues, represented in a pleasing light, and recommended in a graceful manner, will be more likely to engage the attention, and win the affections, of men, than if their display be unaccompanied with outward ornaments. *A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold, in pictures of silver.* In every view, therefore, it is important, that a minister possess natural abilities, which are decent, or which, at least, are not below mediocrity.

2. He should be a man of education, or of literary attainments. It is true, that the apostles, the first preachers of Christianity, are represented as *unlearned and ignorant men*. But we can, by no means infer from this, that literary acquirements are unnecessary to a christian minister. Because, this defect of learning, in the apostles, was, in a supernatural manner, supplied by God. When they were called to preach the Gospel, not having had an opportunity to pursue the usual

and ordinary course of study, God was pleased, by immediate inspiration, to endue them with suitable and necessary qualifications. For, being *filled with the Holy Ghost*, they began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Hence, if learning were not a necessary qualification, in a Gospel minister, "certainly the most wise God," as Dr. South well observes, "would never have been at the expense of a miracle, to endow men of that calling with it." But as the canon of Scripture is now closed, we have no authority to expect any particular inspiration, to supply our literary deficiencies; and he must be an enthusiast indeed, who can make such a pretension.

The christian minister, therefore, who is professionally an instructor and a leader, must go through a course of education, and furnish his mind with useful knowledge. For, *if the blind lead the blind*, the consequences will be evil. How can a minister teach others, if he be ignorant himself? An ignorant minister, or instructor, is a solecism in language; nay, it involves a palpable contradiction.

An acquaintance with the liberal arts and sciences enlarges our views and conceptions. It helps us to understand the holy Scriptures, and assists us, in explaining them to others. Education methodizes the mind. It arranges our thoughts, and reduces them to a system. Consequently, it enables us to reason more ingeniously, to instruct more profitably, and to enforce with more energy. A minister, therefore, ought to cultivate his genius, by literary inquiries; and to treasure up useful knowledge; or he will be but a blind guide to those, whom he professes to lead. He must give himself to study, both previously to his entering upon his sacred employment, and while he continues in it. Otherwise, he will not be a *scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven*; otherwise, he will not bring out of his treasure, things new and old.

3. He must be a man of grace. He must feel the power of that religion, which he professes and inculcates. Wisdom and knowledge are useful handmaids; but grace must be the mistress of the house. If a minister does not love and cherish religion, in his own heart, it is vile hypocrisy for him to profess, or pretend to inculcate it. If he has never been convinced of sin himself, how can he counsel and direct others, under their convictions? If his own *heart be not established with grace*, he will be but a very unskilful artificer, to build up others, in the faith and duties of the Gospel. For a minister to want grace, is to stumble at the threshold. Because, grace is the prime requisite; and without it, he can be neither acceptable to God, nor profitable to men. A minister must not, therefore, rest in the outward *form of godliness*; but he must experience the *power*, or reality, of it. He must have a renewed and sanctified heart. Because, he, who *bear-eth the vessels of the Lord, should be clean*. He must be sincerely and warmly engaged in his holy profession, and in the cause of religion. For, coldness and indifference ill comport with ministerial duty. A sincere regard to the glory of God, and the good of souls, should animate his labors. In short, the incense of piety and grace must be *shed abroad in his heart*, that all his ministrations may partake of the sacred perfume.

4. A minister should be moral and exemplary, prudent and circumspect, in his life and conversation. He must enforce his precepts, by his practice. Mere abstinence, from overt acts of immorality, is not sufficient to recommend the ministerial character. But the power of godliness, and the beauty of holiness, must adorn it. A minister can never effectually inculcate upon others, what he does not practise himself. It is not enough to preach once a week, or merely on the Sabbath; but he must preach, every day, by his good

example. It is the observation of one of the christian fathers, "He preaches sublimely, whose life is irreproachable." How shocking is an unholy life, in a sacred profession! An immoral and unexemplary minister dishonors Christ; disservices the cause of religion; and, instead of reclaiming, hardens sinners. For, though he may preach like an angel, yet, if his conversation be imprudent and dissolute, all his preaching will be ineffectual. He will give occasion to the thoughtless and profane, to reproach and speak evil of this high and holy calling. Such a minister must stand self-condemned. How then can he expect to be acquitted, at the bar of God! His doom must be aggravated.

Again; the christian minister must be circumspect and exemplary, in his deportment; because, the critic's eye will be upon him; and he will be carefully and narrowly observed. There will be always some, to *watch for his halting*. Things, which may appear indifferent in another, are often thought exceptionable in a minister. A human infirmity, or a small deviation from the line of prudence, may be sometimes magnified, into a gross and wilful error. He must, therefore, watch over his actions, and govern his life by the strictest rules of circumspection. In short, he must endeavour, agreeably to our Saviour's direction, to unite the *wisdom* of the *serpent*, with the *innocence* of the *dove*.

In the review of what has been imperfectly suggested, we are reminded, my reverend fathers and brethren in the ministry, of the means, which we are to use, in order to persuade sinners to comply with the terms of salvation; and of the qualifications, which are requisite in us, for executing our sacred office. May we be wanting neither in qualifications, nor in faithfulness. Glorious and honorable is the work, in which we are engaged; and distinguished is the reward of those, who *turn many to righteousness*. But, at the same

time, our employment is arduous, and attended with various difficulties. It requires the greatest care and diligence, to be found faithful in it. Does it not become us, on this occasion, to examine ourselves; to review our services; and see, whether we have *made full proof of our ministry*; whether our diligence has corresponded with the greatness, and our zeal been proportioned to the goodness, of the work, in which we have been engaged? We are too apt to be negligent and cold, even in things of the greatest moment. Our best services are attended with imperfections. For our remissness and unfaithfulness, does it not become us, this day, to humble ourselves, in the sight of God; and to repair unto that blood of atonement, which was shed for the priesthood, as well as for the congregation? Let us now feel afresh our ordination vows, and renew our resolutions to be faithful, in the service of our divine Master; and, to this end, may God afford us the assistances of his grace.

To the Pastorelect, I now turn myself. It is at your request, dear Sir, that I stand here, this day; and with peculiar emotions, I now address you. Particular circumstances occasion particular feelings. Long and intimate has been our acquaintance. For, being natives of the same place,\* it began in our early life; and, what is a moving circumstance to me, you are a lamb of my father's flock. Add to this, you was pleased to put yourself under my instruction, in your preparatory studies, for admission into the University; when I was led to form a more particular acquaintance with you, which has ripened, as I trust, into a sincere and mutual friendship.

My fond concern for your welfare, respectability, and usefulness, went with you to the University. It

\* NORTON, where the author's father, for many years, was minister. But his life and labors are ended.

accompanied you into public life ; and it does not forsake you, my dear brother, on the present occasion.

As you are about to be consecrated to the work of the evangelical ministry, I hope and I trust, that you enter upon it, with serious views, and virtuous intentions ; and I wish you much success and prosperity in it.

Your employment is to persuade sinners to comply with the terms of salvation ; and let your heart be engaged in your employment. Be faithful to the people of your pastoral charge ; be faithful to your own soul. Remember that you must watch, as one, who must give an account. You enter, my dear brother, upon the work of the ministry, in a dark and difficult day ; when infidelity prevails, irreligion abounds, and *the love of many has waxed cold* ; and, therefore, the greater must be your exertion and diligence, in the work before you. You must indeed devote yourself to it. Let the spiritual interests of your people be ever dear to your heart. Regret no labor nor toil, to become profitable to them. Make it your constant endeavor, to promote their everlasting good. Be judicious in your mode of preaching. Offer not stones for bread.—Bring not controversial disquisitions and metaphysical subtilities, into the sacred Desk. But let your preaching be plain and evangelical ; and then it will be practical and profitable. Be inspired with a laudable ambition to excel, in literary and divine attainments, that you may excel, in being useful, and in doing good. To this end, give yourself to reading, to meditation, and to study. Give yourself, also, to frequent and fervent prayer for divine assistance ; that you may become *a workman, who needeth not to be ashamed*.

Ever be ready to take a sympathetic part with your people, both in their prosperities and adversities. In their troubles, especially, let your heart bleed with

their's. Be no stranger to them, in sickness, and in the various trying scenes of life ; but visit, pity, and comfort, them. Endeavour, at all times, and on all occasions, to be useful.

Let your deportment be regular and exemplary, prudent and circumspect ; *giving no offence, in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed.* Enforce your precepts, by your example. Seek to render yourself beloved and respected, both as a man, and as a minister. Endeavour to gain the esteem of your people, by the purity of your doctrines, by the faithfulness of your labors, and by the amiableness of your life.

But after all, my dear brother, you must expect trials and difficulties, in your ministry ; and often will you find your heart discouraged. You will feel the burdens of your sacred employment, pressing heavily upon your spirits. Your labors, though labors of love, may not be acceptable to all. You will find much inattention to your religious instructions ; and often, yea very often, will you have to look, in vain, for the fruits of your ministry. With all your prudence, you must not expect to escape censure. Your best intentions may be misinterpreted ; and the minister has his feelings often wounded, by unkind and uncharitable reflections. But you are to remember, that this life is a state of trial ; and you are not to look for uninterrupted enjoyment here below. Make God your dependence, and let your hope be in him. Bear in mind, for your comfort and encouragement, those gracious promises, *Lo, I AM WITH YOU, and, MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR YOU.* *Be strong, then, my brother, in the grace, that is in Christ Jesus. Be faithful unto death, and great will be your reward in heaven.*

I now address myself to the beloved Church and Christian Society in this place.

Brethren and Christian friends,

Accept my congratulations, on the joyful prospects now before you. It is a number of years, since your aged and worthy pastor\* has been taken off from his public labors, by reason of bodily infirmities, and since he has been removed, by death. For a long period, you have been in a destitute state, involved in darkness and difficulty ; and, though there is not, on this occasion, a perfect unanimity among you, which we feelingly regret, and, towards the dissatisfied, would exercise a candid and tender spirit ; yet, we cannot but indulge a hope, that your trials are, in a measure, passing over, and that brighter and more joyful prospects are, this day, opening to your view. God grant, that our hope may not prove delusive. We rejoice with you, that the great Repairer of breaches, and Head of the Church, has, at length, led you to the choice of one, to take the pastoral care of you, who, by his own consent, is about to be set over you in the Lord, who, we trust, is qualified for this important office, and who, we hope, will approve himself *a pastor after God's own heart*. May he be a rich and lasting blessing to you, that you and your children may have occasion to rejoice, in the transactions of this day.

From my long and particular acquaintance with him, I might say many things in his favor. Upon inquiry, you will find his character to be good. From his cradle, it has been unexceptionable ; and I hope, he will still maintain a good report, among you. I trust that you will find in him a disposition, that is amiable, and a heart, sincerely engaged in the promotion of your spiritual good. I doubt not, but he will feel his obligations, and use his endeavors, to be faithful, in the discharge of his pastoral duties.

\* The Rev. JAMES CHANDLER.

Be not wanting to him, my brethren, on your part, in testimonies of respect and affection. Be candid, towards him. Treat his feelings, and his reputation, with tenderness. Never be disposed to indulge a censorious and uncharitable spirit, so as to magnify his human infirmities, into wilful errors ; but rather veil them, with a mantle of love. Be much in prayer to God, for him ; and encourage his heart, by punctually attending his ministrations, and by profiting under them. I know of no greater joy, which a minister can have, than to see and hear, that his people walk in the truth ; and that he has precious souls, as seals of his ministry.

Liberal and cheerfully support him ; that he may not have occasion to embarrass himself, in secular cares, to *provide for his own* ; but that he may have leisure, to devote himself to the duties of his profession. When God, therefore, smiles upon your labors, and gives you occasion to rejoice in the bounties and blessings of his providence, forget not to rejoice the heart of *the Levite, that is within your gates.*

If his opinion should happen not exactly to agree with your's, in all points of doctrine, you must be charitable and catholic. Remember, that each one has to think for himself, and it is impossible for all to speculate alike. "The best of men differ ; their understandings differ ; various associations have been accidentally formed, and different principles have been innocently, and perhaps devoutly, admitted, which, even in a course of just and sensible reasoning, must necessarily lead to different conclusions."\* Not two, perhaps, ever thought exactly alike, in all things. But the opinions of men will be found to be as various, as the features of the face. We must make allowance

\*See Dr. Doddridge's Sermon, on Christian Candor and Unanimity.

for human infirmities, for different modes of education, and habits of thinking. There may be diversities of opinion, without affecting the essential principles of piety. Two persons may differ in speculative sentiments, and both be good men.\*

Guard, therefore, against divisions and contentions. Let no *root of bitterness* spring up and continue among you. But cultivate a spirit of brotherly love, and mutual forbearance. Make it your constant endeavor, *to keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace*; and God grant, that you may long know, *how good, and how pleasant, it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity.*

I close with a brief address to this numerous Assembly.

You have this day heard, my christian friends, the motives, which you have, to practise duty and accept the offers of salvation; and can you wish for motives more weighty or persuasive? By the goodness of God, by the compassion of Jesus Christ, by the evil conse-

\* When Luther heard some called *Lutherans*, and some, *Zuinglians*, it gave him displeasure. He entreated that his name might be kept in silence; and that none might be called *Lutherans*, but *Christians*. Who is *Luther*, he asked? The doctrine is not mine; nor was I crucified for any. The apostle would not have one called of *Paul*, and another of *Apollos*, and another of *Cephas*. Whence, therefore, shall this happen unto me? Shall the children of God be called by vile names? Away with the idea. O friends! Away with schismatical names.

The *nominal* distinctions, among Christians, have proved a source of much contention and unhappiness, in the world. They have diserved the cause of religion, and have had an evil influence upon the peace and welfare of society. But why should *mere names* have such weight? To make distinctions without a difference, and to dispute about trifles, is unworthy of a reasonable mind. Christians would do well to *contend* less, and *love* more. If we agree in the essentials of christianity, why need we controvert about modes and speculative opinions? It is inconsistent with the law of love, and incompatible with the christian character.

quences of sin and the torments of hell, and by the pleasures of virtue, and the joys of heaven, be now persuaded to embrace the Savior, and partake of the banquet of his love. *Come, for all things are now ready.* Why will you let carnal affections conspire against your peace, so as to make you refuse the gracious invitations of the Gospel? Why will you *sin against God*, and thereby *wrong your own souls*, as well as dishonor him? Let us all be more *wise for ourselves*, and, without delay, secure an interest in Jesus, that we may be prepared for a peaceful death, and for a happy immortality.

A large assembly naturally reminds us of that all important day, when we must meet an assembled world, at the bar of God; and the probability is that I shall never meet you all together again, till that day. FAREWELL till then. May God make us all faithful in his service here, that in the consummation of things, we may be found of him in peace; and be received into the blessed world above, to join the general assembly and Church of the first born, which are written in heaven, to celebrate, in exalted strains, the praises of JEHOVAH and of the LAMB, for ever and ever.

AMEN.

THE INDUCTING ADDRESS,  
IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING THE ORDAINING PRAYER  
AND THE CHARGE.

---

*By the Rev. Mr. CLEAVLAND, of Ipswich.*

---

Mr. Braman;

FOR as much as the church and congregation in this Second Parish of Rowley have chosen and called you to be their PASTOR and TEACHER, and have now publicly renewed it, and you have publicly signified your acceptance of the same—and as this Ecclesiastical Council, convened for the purpose of ordaining you, have received satisfaction, upon a careful examination of all matters relative to the same, “That the way is clear to proceed;” We, the said Council, do, in the name of the great Head of the Church, in the usual way of these churches, by prayer and laying on of hands of the Presbytery, *now ordain you* to be a Minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and, in special, to be the Pastor, Teacher and Overseer, or Bishop, of this flock of God, to preach the word of God, to feed Christ’s sheep and his lambs, to administer the sacraments of the New Testament to the visibly qualified subjects, and to perform all the other parts of the ministerial and pastoral office to this whole flock, and in every part of the Lord’s vineyard, and to all men, as you shall have opportunity and a call, in an orderly way, but in a special manner, in this church and congregation, as their own stated Pastor and Teacher, over whom the Holy Ghost now maketh you *an Overseer*.

## THE CHARGE.

---

*Given by the Rev. Mr. DANA, of Ipswich.*

---

Dear Brother,

**Y**OU are now expressly separated, under the authority of Jesus Christ, to the ministry of the everlasting gospel, and the pastoral charge of the second church and congregation in Rowley.

And whereas it is of great importance to the honor of Jesus Christ, the edification and comfort of his people, the salvation of many ready to perish, and the welfare of your own soul, that you faithfully discharge the trust committed to you, *we charge you, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and kingdom,* TAKE HEED TO THE MINISTRY, WHICH THOU HAST RECEIVED IN THE LORD, THAT THOU FULFIL IT, *serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and watching for souls, as one, who must give account.*

For this end, *Take heed unto thyself.* See, dear brother, that your own heart be friendly to the Redeemer's interest, and that the heavenly religion, you are to preach to others, be the model of your own life. Look well to the principles, which actuate you. *Keep thy heart with all diligence.* Be not entangled with the affairs of this life. *Be sober, vigilant, temperate in all things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.*

*Take heed also unto all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost maketh you an overseer: And as you love the Lord Jesus Christ, feed the sheep, and feed the lambs. Give unto all, their portion in due season.—That you may do this, with the greater advantage, give diligence to know their state; cultivate a Christ-like tenderness towards them; and let your addresses, public and private, all discover, not a clear head only, but a heart, which truly loves them, and ardently wishes their salvation.*

*Preach the word.* Let the Revelation, which God himself hath given of his nature, mind and will, be the ground work of all your teaching. And *take heed unto your doctrine*, that it be always conformable. *Be not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.* Deliver it in its own simplicity; and *avoid the oppositions of science, falsely so called, which some professing, have erred concerning the faith.*

Apply yourself with special diligence *to testify the gospel of the grace of God.* Declare the freeness and the riches of it. Illustrate it from the ruined state and guilty character of man, the object of it. State the way of salvation, with all possible plainness; and *testify, to all persons, repentance toward God, and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Preach Christ in all his offices; and, by every scriptural method of persuasion, *compel sinners to come in, and submit themselves to him, that they may have life.* Preach evangelical holiness, in all its branches; and mark what those doctrines are, which are to be constantly affirmed, TO THIS END, *that they, who have believed in God, may be careful to maintain good works.*

*Be instant in season, out of season: reprove, rebuke, exhort with all authority, and with all long suffering.* Shun not to declare the whole counsel of God. As a true watchman, warn every man.—And, be pure from the blood of all men.

We moreover give you in charge to administer the sacraments of the new testament to the proper subjects; and dispense the discipline of the house of God with impartiality and prudence, courage and compassion.—

*Let no man despise thy youth: Neither lord it over God's heritage; but be an example to all the flock, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity—in all things, approving thyself as a minister of God.*

*Neglect not the gift that is in thee. Give attendance to reading, to meditation; And above all, give yourself to prayer; and depend on the promised presence of Jesus Christ—For, who is sufficient for these things?*

*Believe, for your encouragement, in him, who hath said, My grace is sufficient for you. And, if you shall obtain mercy of the Lord, to be faithful, in his work, know that when the chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*

*Keep therefore this charge unrebukable, and the same commit unto faithful men, as you shall be called thereto. Grace be with thee—The Lord Jesus be with thy spirit.*

---


AMEN.

---

# THE RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP.

---

*By the Rev. Mr. BRADFORD, of Rowley.*



THE Apostle John, a man, whose heart glowed with as pure a flame of unfeigned benevolence, as any, in his own age, or perhaps in any other, in his first Epistle general, to all the followers of Christ, observes, *That, which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, ye may have that fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his son, Jesus Christ.*

Hence, we may observe, that the *fellowship*, which the gospel requires, is with the great *Father* of the *Universe*, with his *Son*, *Jesus Christ*, and with all those, who are evidently his followers and friends, throughout his extensive dominions.

The Union of these composes that infinite *bundle of eternal life*, in which the souls of the redeemed shall be bound up, and sealed for a happy, a never ending eternity.

From the Apostle's conduct, in declaring to his fellow christians, what he had seen and heard, of the great things of the Gospel, we learn, that the fellowship, which our divine Lord and Master requires of us, is founded upon likeness of sentiments, likeness of affections, and likeness of pursuits. Without a good degree of these, there can be nothing of that exalted and sublime harmony, which ennobles and dignifies society, and raises the soul, to the highest pitch of felicity. We must, however, be careful to distinguish between *circumstantials* and *essentials*, in religion; otherwise, we shall fall greatly short of that evangelical fellowship, which was the ornament, happiness, and glory of the disciples of our common Lord and Master.

A fellowship of this kind affects the whole universe of intelligences. For it has been the great object of divine attention from eternity. It excites the admiration and delight of angels and saints, in the world of love, and joy; the malice and rage of devils; the contempt and ridicule of infidels; the absurd and ridiculous triumph of deceitful and false professors; and the exceeding joy and humble hope of all the friends of Zion.

The infinitely benevolent and condescending Prince of peace, in carrying into execution his purposes of grace and mercy, has, from among men, commissioned ambassadors for himself, to preach the *glad tidings* of peace, to a rebel world, to *proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison, to those, who are bound*, to persuade mankind to renounce every selfish pursuit, and heartily embark in the great and glorious cause, in which the Triune God, and all his friends are engaged. In a word, the great object of this embassy is, to promote a permanent fellowship, between the upper and lower world. For, it is *the ministry of reconciliation*, between God and man. But all do not comply with the gracious proposals of heaven, made known to them, by the ambassadors for Christ. To hold up, to the world, therefore, this important friendship and fellowship, between God and his friends, the blessed Jesus has instituted the significant sign of giving the *right-hand* to those, who are introduced, as laborers, into the vineyard of the Lord; a sign pleasing to the friends of Zion; but *terrible*, to her enemies, *as an army with banners*.

The giving of the *right-hand*, in this public and solemn manner, is an expressive token of our hearty welcome of a fellow laborer, into the vineyard of our Lord Jesus Christ; of our unfeigned affection and ministerial communion and fellowship with each other.

and of our mutual dependence, under the great Head of the Church, on each other, for that assistance, which is so desirable among preachers of the Gospel.

With this view, by the desire, and in the name of this venerable Ecclesiastical Council, I give you, Rev. and dear Sir, this *right-hand*. We most heartily congratulate you, on the dedication of yourself, to the great and arduous work of an ambassador for Christ. We bid you a hearty welcome into the vineyard of our Lord. We cheerfully acknowledge you a brother and fellow laborer, in the gospel. And we hereby solemnly pledge our ordination vows, to afford you all reasonable and Gospel assistance and fellowship, if you continue to walk in the order and faith of the gospel;—And we expect the same from you. May we ever walk in the self-denying and, but delightful, paths of Gospel duty. We wish you much of the aid of the Holy Ghost, and the presence of our glorious Lord and Master. May you enjoy the affections of this church and people; and may you early have the pleasure of seeing the work of the Lord prosper in your hands; and when you have finished your course and fulfilled your ministry, may you *shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever*.

We would now congratulate this Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, on this joyful occasion. Long have you been as sheep, scattered on the mountains. The heavens have heard your cries, this day your prayers are answered in having one set over you in the Lord, whom you have chosen out of that large\* number of candidates for the Gospel ministry, who have served among you.

\* Sixty-three candidates have been employed, in this Parish, since the Rev. Mr. CHANDLER was taken off from his public labors.

Men and brethren, we humbly hope and trust, the Pastor, whom you have, this day, placed over you, is a merciful grant of him, who hath *ascended on high, and received gifts for men.* Long, long, may he shine, illuminated by the Father of lights, in this golden candlestick ; and you have reason to rejoice in his light. May the great Head of divine influence, in copious effusions, shed abroad his love, in your hearts, and in the hearts of all flesh. May you ever experience the joys of Gospel fellowship, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.

\*\*\*\*\*  
 AMEN.  
 \*\*\*\*\*