

SERMONS AND CHARGES.

[It does not appear upon what occasion the following Sermon was delivered, though probably it was connected with some ordination service.]

NUMBERS XV. 39.

And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them.

OLD-TESTAMENT institutions are New-Testament instructions, though, thanks be to God, not New-Testament impositions. Those carnal ordinances are capable of a spiritual improvement; particularly this appointment of the fringes which they were ordered to make on the borders of their garments. Observe,

1. The sign appointed, a *fringe* upon the borders of their garments, and a riband of blue upon it. This was a law agreeable enough to their peculiarity; they were not to be reckoned among the nations; they were to be distinguished in garb as well as diet. Some think Christ wore these fringes, Matt. ix. 20; xiv. 36. In this as in other things he was made under the law. These fringes the Pharisees enlarged, Matt. xxiii. 5. that they might seem more holy than their neighbours.—See another law, Deut. xxii. 12.

2. The thing signified by it. It was to be a memorandum to them that they were a peculiar people, and that God had given them laws by which to be governed. We need all possible helps to stir up our obedience, 2 Pet. iii. 1. The phylacteries were distinct from the fringes. They must *look upon the fringe*. Many look upon their ornaments, and are proud: this is a sin to be carefully watched against. This was to be looked upon as a memorial. The Lord's supper is an ordinance of commemoration, that we may look upon it and *remember*—in sight, in mind.

Doctr. That we ought always to remember the commandments of the Lord our God, that we may do them. God's will concerning our duty ought to be had in remembrance by us.

1. That which is to be remembered is the commandments of the Lord. God is our ruler, his will revealed a law to us, and he has laid his commands upon us, both negative and affirmative precepts: those we must remember: see Mal. iv. 4.

(1.) We must not only remember divine histories to talk of, but divine commands; not only Scripture stories, but Scripture statutes, see Heb. xii. 17. *Ye know the story, and yet, v. 5. ye have forgotten the exhortation.*

(2.) Not only divine truths to dispute of, but divine commands; not only doctrines, to fill our heads with notions, but plain precepts, to direct our hearts and lives. These we are to hold fast in faith and love, 2 Tim. i. 13.

(3.) Not only divine promises, to take comfort from, but divine commands. Many love to hear of comfort that do not care to hear of duty. They must have smooth things prophesied to them.

2. Our duty concerning the commandments is, to *remember* them, keep them always in view, and bring them on every occasion to mind.

(1.) It is implied that God has *made known* his commandments to us; we cannot plead ignorance, if we *forget* it is our own fault. They are revealed, they are revealed to us, Mic. vi. 8. revealed by natural conscience, and much more clearly by the written word. He has not left himself without witness.

(2.) That though we have known the commandments of God, yet we are apt to forget them, and lose their power, Heb. ii. 1. If God's truths be forgotten, and the duties he has commanded be out of sight, their practical influence and solid consolation cannot be enjoyed. The forgetful mind will be accompanied by the unsanctified heart, and by the unholy walk.

3.) That therefore we must endeavour always to remember them, that is, Our memories must retain the remembrance of God's commandments, as—what the will of God is in such and such cases, what is the evil that God has bidden, and the good that he has commanded. We must make them familiar to us, Prov. iii. 3; vii. 3, 4. They must be much the objects of our meditation.

Our consciences must be ready to apply the commands of God to particular cases, we must have the precepts at hand that are suited to our present duty, opportunity, and temptation.

When tempted to sin, we must remember the command that forbids that particular sin, Jer. xlv. 4. It is written so and so.

When duty is to be done, according as the work of the day is, we must remember the command that requires that duty; whether it be daily prayer, sabbath sanctification, or any other duty.

When an opportunity of good offers itself, then remember the general command of improving all opportunities.

We are to remember *all* God's commandments, and must not select one and reject another.

3. The intention of this remembrance is in order to obedience to God's will, Josh. i. 8. James i. 25.

(1.) That the frame of our hearts may be according to the commandments, a copy and counterpart of the law in our hearts.

(2.) That the course of our lives may be according to them, that we may steer our course by this compass, and that we may walk by this rule.

Use. Thus remember all the commandments of the Lord, the commandments of the law and gospel. Consider,

1. You were taught them betimes. We are to remember what we learned when we were children.—You were taught these with your first lessons; let not time wear out what you learned when you were children; see Prov. i. 8; iv. 1. You were taught them by those that loved you, 2 Tim. iii. 14. and let this have weight with you.

2. They are great things and worth remembering, they are called the *great things* of the law. They are the things of God, things that concern the soul and eternity. The servant is concerned to remember his master's orders, and every subject, to remember the laws of the realm to which he belongs.

3. They are not grievous, nor such as will burden our memories, 1 John v. 3. God has not made us slaves—all his will is comprised in one word, *Love*.

4. We have many remembrancers—ministers, sacraments, dispensations of providence, and conscience, are designed to fix these things in our minds, and make them ready to us. We receive God's grace in vain, if we forget them.

5. It will be much to our advantage to remember

these commands, God will remember all those who remember him, and treasure up his commands.

CHARGE I.

[The following memorandum connected with the ensuing Charge, appears in Mr. Henry's MS. Diary.

Aug. 6th, 1706. An ordination fast at Knutsford, ordained Mr. Leolin Edwards, of Tinsel, Mr. Thomas Perrot, of Newmarket, and Mr. Silas Sidebottom, of Whelock.—We had a very comfortable day. I hope many were edified. Mr. Angier prayed, Mr. Lawrence preached, 2 Tim. ii. 2. *The same commit thou to faithful men.* I took the confession, and gave the exhortation.—We had much comfort together—were about eighteen ministers—at night went to Winslow; many of my friends with me.]

HAVING now, my brethren, by prayer, solemnly recommended you to God, and to the word of his grace, we are in the close, to speak from God to you, and to give you a charge, as Moses gave to Joshua in the people's sight.

1. We heartily bid you welcome into our number, and bless God there are some coming in, for a great many are gone off of late. We are threatened with the making of a full end, but this is a token for good, and gives us ground to hope that God will not make a full end with us, and will not depart from us—For if he had been pleased to kill us, he would not have showed us such things as these. We rejoice that God has a seed to serve him, that the church has guides, and that we have fellow-labourers; for we need help, our hands are this day weak, and if you be faithful you will strengthen them.

2. We bid you be of good courage. Take your Master's word for it, and our experience to confirm it, that the work you are engaged in is good work. There is a present reward in it, and an eternal reward at the end, 1 Pet. v. 4. We must tell you, that you must count upon discouragements; but be faithful, and then be of good courage. If your hearts be not right with God, you have reason to be discouraged, nothing will be such a damp to you as hypocrisy, but if you be sincere, you must not be discouraged.

(1.) Be not discouraged by your own weakness and infirmities; let them humble you, but not dishearten you, for God's grace is sufficient for you. Where you are weak in yourselves, if sensible of your weakness; and relying on Christ, you shall find yourselves strong. Encourage yourselves to use means for your improvement. God's blessing can do wonders by weak endeavours.

(2.) Be not cast down by the reproaches and in-

juries you may meet with. You set out with the wind in your faces, and perhaps may hear of hard things said of you; but let none of these move you, Acts xx. 24. You are not to stand or fall by men's judgment. Approve yourselves to God, and you may be easy; the smile of our Father will balance the anger of all our foes, and his *well done*, all their unkind censures.

(3.) Be not discouraged by the little success of your ministry; it is the case of many. Some that we have taken pains with, and of whom we said, These shall comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands, are the source of grief to us. But our recompence will be according to our faithfulness, not according to our success;—Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the sight of the Lord. But recollect, it is possible that the want of success may arise from our neglect of duty, Jer. xxiii. 22.

3. We bid you God speed, and it seems in the primitive times that was a great matter, 2 John 10, 11. You have our hearty good wishes. God prosper his work in your hands! We hope we have not sent you to gather the grass on the house-top, which men think not worth giving their blessing with, Ps. cxxix. 6—8. but that you will gather in a harvest of souls. Though you enter into the labour of others, yet he that reapeth receiveth wages, John iv. 36—38. We trust you will thus be rewarded, and therefore we bid you God speed.

4. We direct you to mind your work, and be true to the trusts reposed in you. You are sworn to no other canonical obedience, but to the Scriptures; so that I need only point out the rules to you.

(1.) *That good thing which is committed to you*, keep, 2 Tim. i. 14. the form of sound words, v. 13. the gospel truths, the knowledge of which you have signified, and in which you professed your belief, 1 Tim. vi. 12, 20. This is the true grace of God, wherein you stand. Stand to it then, and never let it go. We see you have bought the truth. Sell it not at any rate; you can never lose by the purchase, nor get by the sale. You are intrusted with the charge of the sanctuary, Numb. iii. 25. to preside in solemn assemblies, and to administer holy ordinances. Keep the charge, though you be called as they were, to war a warfare in it.

(2.) *Give attendance to reading*, 1 Tim. iv. 13. You must be laying in, or you cannot lay out. Be still furnishing yourselves with useful knowledge. Read the Scriptures, and other books to help you to understand the Scriptures. It is expected that you excel in knowledge, and a shame if others, whose study and business is about the world, should excel you. Every evening ask, What have I learned to-day? Get good books, borrow them, collect out of them; in all labour there is profit, and I hope there will be pleasure. Be in study as in your element.

If it be a weariness to the flesh, the delight of the spirit will make amends.

(3.) *Take heed to yourselves, and to your doctrine*, 1 Tim. iv. 16.—*to yourselves*, that you may save yourselves. Look well to the state of your own souls, that you may experience in them what you preach to others, may digest that yourselves, with which you would affect others. Keep a strict watch over your own hearts. *To your doctrine*—that it be sound, and according to the Scriptures, suited to the capacities and necessities of your hearers. Offer not that which cost you nothing. Take pains in all you do, that you may find out acceptable words. Let all your performances smell of the lamp; it will engage the attention of your people; they will be careless if you are so. *Take heed to your doctrine*, that it oppose neither God's grace nor man's duty, but take both together.

4. *Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves*, Matt. x. 16.—these two must go together. *Prudence*, not fleshly wisdom, but that which is by the grace of God. It will be your prudence to meddle as little as may be in secular affairs, not to entangle yourselves in the affairs of this life—Who made me a judge or divider? Also to take heed what you say of other people. There is a time when the prudent shall keep silence. With this prudence unite *innocency*. A dove-like spirit without gall will well become you. If others be any way injurious to you, do not meditate revenge, for that is not *dove-like*. Your business is to do good to all, therefore your care must be to do hurt to none.

5. *Give no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed*, 2 Cor. vi. 3. Preserve the reputation of your ministry. Get and keep a good name, Phil. iv. 8. avoid the very appearance of evil. The most circumspect cannot escape censure, but you should endeavour to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. Let it never be said of you, that you are proud and haughty, that you are vain and trifling, that you are covetous or worldly. Deny yourselves in many things which otherwise are lawful, that you may save the credit of your ministry; it is an honour to you, be not you a reproach to it. If that be blamed, we are blamed who have set you apart to it. You have many eyes upon you, and some that watch for your halting, therefore walk accurately.

6. *Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof*, 1 Pet. v. 2. Acts xx. 28. You are charged with souls, precious souls, the purchase of Christ's blood. Every Christian that has but one soul to look after, finds enough to do; if all had but one, it would find them work enough; but you have many, *feed* them, and do not poison them. Do not make the offering of the Lord to be abhorred. feed them and do not starve them. Have a concern for souls, for *theirs* in particular;—feed the ignorant with knowledge, the careless with admonition, the

ndering with direction, and the mourning with comfort. As the master of a family has a constant care of his family, so you of your flocks. They are volunteers, therefore you may be the more encouraged in dealing with them.

7. *Be instant in season, and out of season.* This is argued with great solemnity, 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2. Take all occasions for the pulpit, and make it to appear at your work is your delight, and not a drudgery; use all opportunities for instructing and exhorting personal converse. Never reckon it *out of season* to do good to poor souls. Seek opportunity; it is in season when they are in affliction; then an inter-eter will be one of a thousand; fail not to visit the sick. *Be instant* also in visiting those that are in health. Wherever you come, leave a good word behind you.

8. *Show yourselves patterns of good works,* Tit. ii. Christ began to do and teach, Acts i. 1. and so must you, else you pull down with one hand what you build up with the other.—Your voice is Jacob's; let your hands be his too. You would have others to be serious and humble; be you so. You must put others in mind as directed, Tit. iii. 1, 2. set them an example then: see 1 Tim. iv. 12. Though you are young in age, you are elders in office, and therefore it becomes you to be serious. If any variance happen, be patterns of peace-making, yielding to others, and bearing with them. You will hardly reconcile those to Christ, whom you cannot reconcile to yourselves. Win upon all by love and meekness.

9. *Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus,* 1 Tim. ii. 1. See that you have true grace yourselves, and then that you be stronger and stronger. Let all your strength be in the grace of Christ; derive aid from him daily. Depend always upon him. Do all in his name and for his glory; without this, the youths will faint and be weary, Ps. lxxi. 16. Never rely upon your own strength. When you study, or preach, go in the strength of Christ; you are not sufficient of yourselves, but he will be sufficient for you, and if trying times should come, depend upon his grace to enable you to persevere.

10. *Hold fast till Christ comes*—This is all the burthen that is laid upon the presbyters of Thyatira, Rev. ii. 24, 25. There are many that are seeking to wrest your good things from you. That which is committed to you, hold it fast; never let it go. Christ comes to own you and crown you; persevere to the end, that you lose not your crown. You cannot go back; go forward then, go on to the end, then shall he appear to your joy. I hope you are satisfied in what you have done here to-day; do not undo it again, but hold it fast. To conclude, now, in the close of the day,

1. Remember the vows you have this day made, they are upon you; you have sworn, see that you per-

form it. Be not irresolute; you are in Christ's bonds, and they are good, let these bonds hold you.

2. Remember the prayers that have been this day made for you, for your encouragement. Paul often tells his friends for what he prayed for them, that they might be encouraged. Many earnest prayers have been put up for you, which you will reap the benefit of, if it be not your own fault. Defeat not our prayers.

3. Remember the charge that has now been given you, the trust committed to you, and set your hearts to it. It is to Timothy that Paul writes, Consider what I say, and the Lord give you understanding in all things.

CHARGE II.

[Extract from Mr. Henry's MS. Diary.

May 13th, 1707. Ordination fast at Knutsford, Mr. Low, Dr. Holland, and Mr. Angier prayed. Mr. Lawrence preached, Ps. xvi. 13. *Show me the path of life.* Mr. Twemlow and Mr. Garsyde were set apart, by imposition of hands. We were minded of our ordination vows. O that the obligations of them may abide always upon me! We were refreshed with the society of our brethren.]

THE charge we have now to give you, now you are sworn on this grand inquest, between our Sovereign Lord, the King of kings, and his church on earth, is not a light thing, for it is your life. Let me tell you,

I. In general, what sort of charge it is.

1. It is a divine charge. We have not the appointment of your work, we only are to tell it you; you have your charge from the same hand that gives you your commission, and that puts you into the ministry, even Christ, whose ministers and stewards you are. He commanded the twelve, Matt. x. 5; xi. 1. and afterward, Acts i. 2. and from him you are to expect the blessing, Luke xxiv. 50. and strength to fulfil your trust.

2. It is a solemn charge, enough to strike an awe upon the lightest mind. See with what solemnity Paul gives Timothy a charge again and again: though he was a man of a serious spirit, Paul saw he needed it, 1 Tim. v. 21; vi. 13, 14. 2 Tim. iv. 1. That the sense of it may remain upon you, receive it with solemnity. God's eye is upon you, and the eye of Christ, and the holy angels see you.

3. It is a charge which requires the whole man for the fulfilling of it, all that is within you. If a man had ten souls, the ministry is work enough for them all; therefore the charge of the sanctuary was committed to men in the prime of their time, between twenty-five and fifty years of age. You have

always something to do, either fishing or mending the nets.

4. It is a charge for life. While God gives you ability and opportunity, you are to continue labour. You are laying your hand to a plough, from which there is no looking back; a charge from which you must not think of being *discharged* till your life shall end. In case of sickness, God will have mercy and not sacrifice; and if restrained by men, you will find the same mercy; but you must not expect a life of idleness, and if you be Christ's servants you will not desire it.

5. It is a charge upon which you will be called to an account in the great day. Ministers must be judged—your office will not exempt you. If you profane the holy things of God, remember Nadab and Abihu, in the day when they were consecrated.

II. In particular we give you charge,

1. Concerning the oracles of God, the Holy Scriptures. They are a sacred deposit; you are intrusted with the custody of them. They may easier be kept now in writing, than when by tradition. You are the stewards that are intrusted with this treasure.

(1.) Let these oracles be your *study*. Converse with them daily. Make the Scriptures familiar to you. Learn the Scriptures by heart. Be ready and mighty in the Scriptures, as Apollos was, Acts xviii. 24.

(2.) Let them be your *standard*, your touchstone. By these try yourselves first,—your own hearts and lives, your spiritual state, and your ministry—whether you answer the Scripture characters. By these try the spirits, 1 John iv. 1. and try doctrines and practices, Isa. viii. 20.

(3.) Let them be your *store-house*. Fetch your prayers and sermons out of the Scriptures: it will make the man of God perfect, 2 Tim. iii. 17. Matt. xlii. 52. And let them be the magazine of your spiritual warfare.

(4.) Let them be your *stay*. Establish yourselves from the Scriptures, and encourage yourselves. This is the word on which you are caused to hope, even the word of truth, 2 Cor. vi. 7. Hope in the word, when other encouragements fail. We give you charge,

2. Concerning the *ordinances of Christ*. These are the mysteries you are stewards of, 1 Cor. iv. 1. see Numb. iii. 6, 10. These are a trust, a dispensation committed to us, 1 Cor. ix. 17. Be very careful then,

(1.) In your *admission* to special ordinances. You are intrusted with the keys, Matt. xvi. 19. be very cautious to avoid the extremes. Let not those that are grossly ignorant, or scandalous, be suffered to profane the holy things of the Lord; yet let not those be rejected, that are weak in the faith, or in small matters differ from you, Rom. xiv. 1.

(2.) In your *administration* of all the ordinances.

Seeing you are not obliged to forms, you have the more need to furnish yourselves for every good word and work. Let not that liberty be turned into licentiousness. Improve in your praying gifts. Offer not any thing unbecoming the seriousness of the ordinance. Use Scripture expressions; they are most unexceptionable to all, and the most agreeable to them that are serious: see Eccl. v. 2. Pray in the spirit of prayer, Rom. viii. 26. In preaching, be studious; offer not that which costs you nothing, 1 Tim. iv. 13, &c. Keep to the proportion of faith, Rom. xii. 6. Speak with the words which the Holy Ghost teaches, 1 Cor. ii. 13. 1 Pet. iv. 11. Choose for your subjects the plainest and most needful truths: endeavour to make them plainer, and be serious in the delivery. In administering sacraments prepare somewhat beforehand, and keep up a reverence for those seals of the covenant. We exhort you,

3. Concerning the *case of your own souls*. Take heed to *thyself*, to save thyself in the first place. 1 Tim. iv. 16.

(1.) Make sure your own interest in Christ, and a work of grace in your hearts, that you may speak by experience. Be not as Noah's workmen, that built an ark for others, and perished themselves. Your work will be a task and burthen to you, if you do not relish divine things; and you cannot expect God's blessing.

(2.) Keep up an *intimacy* with your own hearts. Be much in communing with them. Keep your own vineyards; else how can you keep others. Feel what you speak; it will be quite another thing when it comes from the heart. Make that clear to yourselves which you would make clear to others, and be affected with that yourselves with which you would affect others. Look well to your principles and aims. Let your eye be single. Take heed of pride, it will spoil all. There is no greater ornament to a young minister than humility, Ps. lxxi. 16. We address you,

4. Concerning the course of your conversation. If your lives be not of a piece with your preaching, you pull down with one hand what you build up with the other. See to it, that in your conversation,

(1.) You preserve the credit of your ministry. We charge you with this, because the glory and honour of God is concerned in it, which will suffer if you miscarry yourselves: see Rom. ii. 21, 24. Keep at a distance from all evil, from all appearances of it. Many eyes are upon you; let your conversation be grave, sober, and pure. Ministers should be mortified men, 1 Cor. ix. 27. see 1 Tim. vi. 11. 2 Tim. ii. 22.

(2.) That you promote the ends of your ministry. Preach in your lives. Good discourse will be expected from you, and better taken from you than from others. Be examples to believers, 1 Tim. iv. 12.

Let them see that you yourselves believe what you tell them of the evil of sin. They will do as you do sooner than as you say. Make your converse edifying, that every company you come into may be the better for you. We charge you,

5. Concerning the welfare of the church in general. You are the messengers of the churches, as well as the *glory of Christ*, 2 Cor. viii. 23. Be serviceable to the church,

(1.) By your prayers. You are watchmen upon the walls, Isa. lxii. 6, 7. be intercessors for the church. Prophets prayed for the public peace. Stand in the gap, as Moses. Who should if you do not? Acquaint yourselves with the state of the churches, that you may be particular in your requests.

(2.) By your peaceableness. Condemn not those that differ from you. Be not censorious; widen not our differences; and judge charitably of all. Praise that which is good, and make the best of what you dislike. We speak to you,

6. Concerning the welfare of those congregations that are particularly committed to your charge. They must in a special manner be your care. You are their choice, and are not thrust upon them, and therefore you have in some respects a greater advantage in dealing with them, Acts xx. 28. 1 Pet. v. 2.

(1.) In your public ministrations, study their good, what they most need—as the physician studies the case of his patient; avoid personal reflections, and apply those words of God which you think will reach their case, and pray they may reach their consciences.

(2.) In your private applications, when they apply themselves to you especially; and though they do not, seek opportunity to apply yourselves to them.

Be familiar with them, never shy nor haughty. Show yourselves glad of an occasion to talk with them about their souls. Be so well furnished, that you need not fear betraying ignorance. Be so humble, as not to think it a disparagement to converse with the meanest saint, but rather a disparagement to be in company with the haughtiest sinner.

Be faithful to them, tell them with meekness of their faults,—and then you may hope to see the great ends of your ministry attained.

CHARGE III.

[Extract from Mr. Henry's MS. diary.

• October 20, 1707. Went by Wrenbury Wood to Nantwich, to an ordination. The evening spent in examining the candidates at Mr. Lawrence's,—Mr. Richard Lessingham, of Grantham in Lincolnshire, who brought very good testimonials, Mr. William Bryan, of Newcastle, Mr. John King, of Stone, and Mr. John Kenrick, of Wrexham.

21st. An ordination fast. Mr. Lawrence began; Mr. Irham prayed; Dr. Holland preached; I took the confession, and gave the exhortation. We were in all about twenty ministers. The candidates discovered much seriousness, and we hope they are all likely to serve the cause of God. Dr. Holland preached, Acts xxvi. 17, 18. We were much refreshed, and there were none to make us afraid.]

THE question God put to Elijah, we desire to put to ourselves—What do we here? and the question Christ put to the people concerning John, we would put to you—What come ye out for to see?

1. We that are ministers, should be able to give a good account what we do here. We are not here to strive or cry, or to have our voice heard in the streets; not to revile the government or the national establishment. We desire to be found of the quiet in the land; not to contend with our brethren, or condemn those from whom we differ. To the same Master they and we must stand or fall. We hope we take not too much upon us; but as ministers we are to give ourselves to the word and prayer. As in other things, so in this, by prayer to recommend to God, and by the word to recommend to you, some that are here, to give up themselves to the service of Christ in the work of the ministry. We pretend not to *commission* them; they have their commission from Christ; nor to *consecrate* them; they have their consecration from the Holy Ghost. We pretend not to give them the Holy Ghost, it is not in our power, but solemnly to set them apart, or rather to recognize their setting of themselves apart, to this great work, and to bless them in the name of the Lord. We hope the ordination of Timothy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, will bear us out before God in what we do, 1 Tim. iv. 14. and there is a promise to two or three that agree to ask any blessing of God, Matt. xviii. 19, 20.

2. You that are the candidates, are concerned to consider what you do here. You are here to dedicate yourselves to Christ. You have made some trial of his work, and you are now to be bound, as those that like it well, and would not go out from it. You have counted the cost, and have resolved to make the ministry your business, and give yourselves to it.

3. The people are to consider what they come hither to see. We are to give them a charge in *your sight*, that you may see what obligations your ministers are under to their work, and may esteem them highly, and help them with your prayers; may value the privilege of a standing ministry, and be thankful for the gifts and powers given to men. For your full satisfaction we are to tell you,

(1.) What has been done concerning those that are now to be offered to God. They have been educated in learning; the schools of the prophets have

given proof of their abilities. Every scholar is not fit to be made a minister. They have been tried, and found apt to teach. They have been tried by the people to whom they are to minister, and found fit for them, and of a good conversation. They are not only blameless, but exemplary. They have showed themselves able not only to preach the truth but defend it.

(2.) What is now to be done. They are to make a confession of their faith. We leave them to do it in their own words, that you may understand their knowledge in the mystery of Christ, Eph. iii. 4. and that ye may be satisfied in their soundness in the faith. They are to make their vows to the Lord, and they shall be their free-will offerings. Remember you are in the presence of God.

EXHORTATION.

WHEN Solomon by a long prayer had dedicated the temple, blessed God, and blessed the congregation, he concluded with an exhortation, 1 Kings viii. 61.—so do we.

I. By way of *charge*. There are five things we have to give you in charge, according to what has been done this day.

1. The confessions of faith you have this day made. Hold fast those sound words. The doctrines of Christ are called *traditions*, 2 Thess. ii. 15. because delivered to you to keep. Keep them safe, keep them pure. Contend earnestly for the faith; it is worth contending for. You have bought it; it is a good bargain; sell it not. Keep them in faith and love. We take you to be faithful men, and therefore commit the deposit to you, 2 Tim. ii. 2.

2. The covenants with which you have this day bound your souls. The vows of God are upon you; do not complain of the weight of them as a burthen, but feel the strength of them as a bond. You have opened your mouth to the Lord, and cannot go back. Oft call to mind your ordination vows, those sacred things:—Did I not say, I would be diligent and faithful? I did, and dare not unsay it.

3. The credit of the office to which you have this day been admitted. It is a very high and honourable calling. You are called to be ambassadors for Christ, to be masters of religious assemblies, and stewards in God's house. If you in any thing carry yourselves amiss, you bring disgrace upon your profession. Take heed that the ministry be not blamed. It is not your credit only, but the credit of the gospel, that lies at stake. You have many eyes upon you, and have much for which to answer. Beware lest you should grieve the good, and harden the bad.

4. You have this day been intrusted with the cus-

tody of the ordinances,—the word, sacraments, and prayer. Keep them pure and entire. Take heed that none of them be debased, and so suffer damage, through you. Corruptions are apt to creep in; let your eye be to the institution; be faithful as the people's mouth to God, and God's to them. Remember from whom you are speaking, and whom you address. Teach what Christ has commanded, pray according to the direction of the word, attend properly to baptism and the Lord's supper, and carefully maintain discipline.

5. The care of the people to whom you are this day recommended. Feed the lambs and the sheep. We hope you love Christ; if you do, take care of those you have purchased. Remember you are watchmen, you are shepherds,—if you neglect your duty, blood will be required at your hands. Though I think not the union between ministers and people inseparable, yet I think the relation very near. Bear them upon your hearts before the Lord.

II. By way of *caution*. You are in danger. As soon as ever Nadab and Abihu were consecrated they fell into that sin which cost them so dear. Be not high-minded, but jealous over yourselves with godly jealousy.

1. Take heed of affecting novelties in religion, lest you fall into vanities, or worse. Ask for the old way. Keep to the faith once delivered to the saints. Be still building upon the old foundation, in which it is good to be established, Heb. xiii. 9.

2. Take heed of spiritual pride. This is spoken of as the temptation of young ministers, 1 Tim. iii. 6. Think not you have already attained, but forget the things that are behind. Magnify your office, but do not magnify yourselves. It is not outward honour at which we must aim. Let evil report help to lay us low, and let not good report help to lift us up. Boasting is for ever excluded, 1 Cor. iv. 7. Pray much against this sin; pray for grace sufficient.

3. Take heed of the indulgence of the flesh. Paul minds himself of it. Take it not ill that I remind you of it, 1 Cor. ix. 27. Prophets are spiritual men; but the prophet is a fool, and the spiritual man is mad, if he submit to the dominion of carnal lusts. Be sober in the use of creature comforts. That liberty which may be decent in another may be culpable in a minister.

4. Take heed of worldliness. The love of money in a minister, is the root of more evil than in any other person. Regard not present things if the heavenly Canaan be your possession; let them that know no better take their portion in these things, but the Christian may not call earth his all.

5. Take heed of growing remiss in your work. You now take pains; do so while you live. Think not after a while you may relieve yourselves, and go over your old stock. The Scriptures still afford new things to them that search them. Continue searching.

How can you expect God's blessing, or your people's attention, if you be careless in your work.

III. By way of *counsel*. I know you will take the advice of a friend that wishes well to you and your work. The Lord give you counsel, and enable you to receive it.

1. Be well acquainted with your own hearts. Converse with them, and take pains with them. See that the good work be wrought and going on there. Fetch your applications from thence, that you may speak with feeling—such a thing affected me. One heart answers another; therefore employ those methods of which you yourselves have found the benefit. We speak that we have seen. He that ruleth not himself, how shall he rule the church? Speak from the heart.

2. Study closely; especially make the Bible your study. There is no knowledge in which I am more desirous to increase, than the knowledge of the Scriptures. Give attendance to reading, 1 Tim. iv, 13. As long as you live, be still gathering, and increasing your stock. Take pleasure in your study, and be in it as in your element.

3. Let all your performances be plain and scriptural. Affect not fine words, but words which the Holy Ghost teaches; that is sound speech which cannot be condemned. Enticing words of man's wisdom debase your matter; gold needs not be painted. Study plainness. Scripture expressions are what people are used to, and will remember. Consider the lambs of the flock you must take along with you, and do not over-drive them, by being over-long, or over-fine.

4. Be familiar with your people, not high or strange in your behaviour. Converse with them for the good of their souls, and let your common converse with them tend to that, and be seasoned with it. Acquaint yourselves with the state of their souls, their temptations, and their infirmities, and you will know the better how to preach to them, and pray with them. Encourage them to ask you questions about their souls. It will become you to promote good discourse on all occasions.

5. Let Jesus Christ be all in all with you. Study Christ, preach Christ, and live Christ. Remember you are his ministers, the friends of the Bridegroom, and must not preach yourselves, nor live yourselves. How full is Paul of Jesus Christ! It is Christ that will call you to account. Be not full of controversies, but full of Christ. Love the image of Christ wherever you see it, even in those from whom you differ.

IV. By way of *comfort and encouragement*. You must expect to meet with difficulties from the oppositions of Satan and the frowns of the world. You must expect reproach and contempt; it is our present trial. You may be tempted to think all this had been prevented, if you had been of some other em-

ployment. You see little success of your ministry, and that is a discouragement—you labour in vain, Jer. xx. 9. but the greatest discouragement is from within, our own weakness; we do not profit ourselves; we fear we shall not hold out. But we have several things to encourage us:

1. The goodness of our work. We are despised, but our work is not despicable. It is work for Christ and the souls of men. It is work that will be successful, though we see not and feel not the success we desire. Can we ever employ ourselves better, than in that which is the proper business of our office?

2. The kindness of our Master. He accepts of our sincere endeavours; he has promised to own us, to be with us to the end of the world, and with each rising generation.

3. The promise of the Spirit to help our infirmities, to assist us in our work, and to make it successful. The promise of the Spirit relates especially to ministers, John xiv. and xvi.

4. The experiences of your predecessors. They have found God all-sufficient to them. They did not, nor do we, repent of entering upon this good work.

5. The prospect of the recompence. Bear contempt; if you be faithful, there is honour before you, and the best preferment.—As to the people that stand related to you,—I would exhort that you report to your company what you have seen and heard, and make one another sensible of the obligations you lie under to love one another, to communicate mutual aid and consolation, and to fear every root of bitterness.

CHARGE IV.

[*Extract from Mr. Henry's MS. diary.*

April 13, 1708. This day was spent in ordaining Mr. Beynon, at Whitchurch. Mr. Lawrence began, Mr. David Jones, of Salop, preached, 2 Tim. ii. 16. Mr. Doughty prayed. I took his confession, prayed over him, and gave the exhortation. He performed with great seriousness, and gave universal satisfaction.]

My brethren, God is our record, whom we desire to serve with our spirits in the gospel of his Son, that we address ourselves now to this solemn work of ordaining a minister, not in any contempt of, or opposition to, the national establishment; not with design to support a faction, to make a party, or to advance any secular interest of our own, much less do we aim to disturb the public repose. We desire always to be found among the quiet in the land, and to be subject to principalities. We would ren-

der to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's.

With the allowance, and under the protection, of the government that is over us, we are here, by the word and prayer to set apart one to the service of Christ and his church—to recommend him to God by prayer, and to the word of his grace, and then to recommend him to you, to be received and owned as a minister of Christ. The principle we go upon is, that all societies for religious worship ought to have guides and overseers, whose office it is to preach, &c. that to this work men ought to be regularly called, and that those are so which “*be called and chosen to this work by men, who have public authority given them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard.*”—Article 23. This authority must be had from Christ. Why they that in other things are employed in the word and prayer, and are stewards, should not be in this, we do not yet see.

But the great thing we are to mind, is the frame of our own hearts. O that we may be sincere and serious in what we do, that we that are ministers may do it with a due sense of the weight of our work, our unworthiness of it, and our unfitness for it.

That you that are now to be set apart may offer yourself to God, a living sacrifice in faith and love, consider what you are going about, whether you give yourself willingly. We have reason to bless those that willingly offer themselves, Neh. xi. 2.

You that attend this work, we desire to give you all just satisfaction. The minister of Christ we are to recommend to you has been well educated, has made trial of his gifts, and met with approbation. You have had some trial of him; it is your desire he should be set apart; and he is now to give an account of his faith.

WHEN our Lord Jesus sent forth his disciples with his blessing and Spirit, he gave them commandments, Matt. x. 5. Acts i. 2. The ministry is an honour, a great honour, but it is also a work, a good work, and as such we commit it to you; not giving you any other commandments than what our Master has given, which are not grievous; no, the yoke of the ministry, as well as of Christianity, is easy and light. We lay no other burthen but *necessary things*; none but what Christ has laid, and what we desire ourselves by the grace of God to receive.

I. Let me desire you always to keep in remembrance what you have been doing to-day, 2 Tim. i. 6. Pause a while. I hope you did not do it rashly, and that now you do not wish it undone; bear it in

mind then, *Know ye not what I have done to you*, John xiii. 12. I hope this day's work will leave upon you a truly indelible character, which you will never forget.

1. Think oft of the confession of faith you have made; hold it fast, 2 Tim. i. 14. cleave to the truth of God, and contend earnestly for them. Your foundation is good, keep to it, and take care what you build upon it, 1 Cor. iii. 12.

2. Think oft of the solemn vows with which you have now bound your souls. Keep what you delivered, and peruse it sometimes. Thy vows are upon me, O God. Remember these bonds, examine yourself by them, and excite yourselves with them.

3. Think oft of the prayers that have been put up for you. Do nothing to frustrate those prayers. Let our prayers return into our own bosoms, Ps. xiii. 13. we are no losers; but we would be gainers.

4. Think of the place you are in, and those that are gone before you here. See what Christ says of his disciples, John iv. 37, 38. yet compare with this. Here has been a good foundation laid: you come among a people that I hope retain something of what they have heard and received; let that encourage you. Yet I hope you will break up the fallow ground.

5. Think of the time of your entrance, when death has been busy among us, and let it awaken you to diligence. They being dead, yet speak to us that survive.

6. Think of the expectations of your people from you. If that will open you a wide door, you have it. They promise themselves much from God through you. Let them have joy of you, and you shall have joy in them. I desire to bless God that I see this day is an answer to prayer.

II. Let me beg of you to keep the charge of the Lord your God. That good thing which is committed to you, keep.

1. That which God has committed to you by our ordination. God is to be glorified; the kingdom of Christ is to be supported; religious assemblies are to be kept up in order to the maintaining of religion. You are intrusted with the vessels of the sanctuary; you are to be messengers to keep up the correspondence between God and his people; see 1 Cor. x. 31; xiv. 26; xiv. 4. Col. iii. 17. walk according to these rules. You will be called to account of this trust: receive it with that charge, Ezra viii. 28, 29. and that which refers to it, Isa. lii. 11.

2. That which the people have committed to you by their choice. Expect not that they should follow you with an implicit faith; but they have intrusted you to search the Scriptures for them. They have taken you not to have dominion over their faith, but to be a helper of their holiness and joy. Feed the sheep, feed the lambs; you are their guide. Be true to the trust committed to you. Watch for their souls.

ib. xiii. 17. save them from death, do what you can. In order to the keeping of this charge, suffer word of exhortation, a word which I would faithfully address to myself, as well as to you, as our ties are similar. God expects much from me, and expects much from you. May we hear his will, and render to it the fullest obedience.

(1.) Let us keep close to the word of God as our rule. You are to minister the gospel of the grace of God. Keep to that gospel as a gospel of grace. Every man that went to teach had the book of the law with them, 2 Chron. xvii. 9. Fetch your knowledge from the Scriptures, all your arguments, your language, your examples, and your illustrations. Scriptural preaching is the best, and a Scripture conversation.

(2.) Let us keep up our communion with God, both in secret and in all our public performances. Let us endeavour to realize eternal objects. Let us feel the power of those truths, and the obligation of those laws, of which we speak to others. God gives his prophets leave to be free with him; let us use our freedom; let us not be strangers to our Master. It is our privilege that we are oft called to prayer; let our souls be with God in every prayer.

(3.) Let us keep conscience void of offence. How can we expect God's presence, and strength, and blessing? This was Paul's care, Acts xxiv. 16. We profess to have a tenderness of conscience, and let it be manifested upon every occasion. Let it be visibly seen that we cannot satisfy ourselves in the commission of any sin, nor in the neglect of any duty. If we walk not in God's counsels, how can we expect to profit his people. Take heed of sin; do not spoil your ministry if you suffer that worm at the root.

4. Let us ever be active. We have constant work, we must either be bringing into our treasuries or distributing from them. Fill up your time: a minister's time should especially be precious. Let us gather as we spend; let us love our studies; let us give attendance to reading; and fear every thing which has the appearance of negligence.

(5.) Let us keep humble, having low thoughts of ourselves, of what we do, and what we are capable of doing. The clothing of humility is the best distinguishing habit of a minister. Let us be distrustful of ourselves, that we may depend upon Christ. Let us be conscious of our own unworthiness, that we may stoop to the meanest. Servants must stoop, and become all things.

(6.) Let us keep the peace. We are in Christ's kingdom, appointed to be preservers of the peace. Let us study to live peaceably with those of opposite sentiments to ourselves. Let us be offensive to none, and obliging to all. Let not the gospel of peace be preached contentiously.

(7.) Let us keep Christ upon our hearts. In this

let us be followers of blessed Paul, who was so full of Christ. Every sermon must contain Christ. Every action must be performed in his strength, and every trial endured in his name. Let men have opportunity of taking knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus.

(8.) Let us keep heaven in our eye, and be encouraged in the difficulties of our work. Heaven will make amends for all. The faithful labourer can never be a loser; he shall find his reward at last.

I would address the members of this congregation:

How earnestly do I desire your welfare, to hear that your souls prosper, and that your conversation is as becomes the gospel! I have reason to bear you much upon my heart; I have done so, and I hope shall while I live. I often call to remembrance the days of old, the years I spent in communion with you, and now desire,

1. You would not forget the ministers you have had with you. You have been as a field that the Lord has blessed. God has sown plentifully among you. You have had the good word of your ministers. I remember my father, in a sermon in 1673, say, there were three things for which he praised the people of Whitchurch: "That they were sound in their judgments, not carried about with the wind of opinions; that they were of one mind and way; and that they had none of those merely worldly clubs and fellowships that are in some other towns, among professors, whereby a great deal of harm is done both to themselves and to their profession." Is it so still? May it ever be so!

2. That you would encourage your present minister. I rejoice in the general satisfaction you have in your choice. I trust he is come among you in the fulness of the gospel of Christ. He has himself desired, and I second it in your presence, your prayers and your practice. Let me add, be free with him, not strange to him. Inquire the law at his mouth; ask good questions, and you will have good answers. Love him, think all little enough you can do for him, and especially adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour. Bear contempt and reproach with meekness, and do not return either the one or the other. That which honours your profession and minister, will be your own honour. Live so that he that sows and they that reap may rejoice together for ever.

CHARGE VI.

[*Mr. Henry's MSS. contain no information respecting the person to whom this charge was given, nor the time of its delivery.*]

THAT which now remains, is to address an exhortation to you, my brother, now solemnly set apart to the

work of the ministry. Think you hear Christ saying to you, as to his disciples, *Know ye what I have done to you*, John xiii. 12. I say, What Christ has done, for it is he that has called you into your ministry, 1 Tim. i. 13. I hope you have such a sense of what Christ has done to you, what he has wrought upon your soul, as that your impression of it will abide upon you, so that nothing would induce you to leave the master you have chosen, nor to abandon that good work which he has appointed for you. You have received a commission from the Lord Jesus, to be an officer in his kingdom, the apostles were extraordinary ambassadors, 2 Cor. v. 20. Ministers are his servants to carry on his gracious designs. You have bound your soul with a bond, faithfully to do the work of a minister. Now it is requisite you should rightly understand what the trust is that is committed to you, and that you have accepted: see 1 Tim. ii. 6. It is a great trust, and you must shortly give account.

I. There is that which is committed to us ministers in common with all Christians, our precious souls. Let me charge this upon every one of you, Prov. iv. 23. Keep a watchful jealous eye upon your own hearts. We that are ministers especially, that it may not be said, we have kept the vineyards of others, but our own vineyard we have not kept, Cant. i. 6. Take heed to thyself in the first place, 1 Tim. iv. 16. Acts xx. 28. Look well to the state of your soul, that you may be able to speak experimentally. Look well to the frame of your spirit. Be concerned that you gain spiritual advantage from the sermons you preach to others. We have an advantage above others, in frequent praying and meditation.

II. There is that which is committed to us as ministers. There are things we solemnly charge you with. The Levites had their particular trust, and the Christian minister also has his work. He that enters into a service has various things committed as trusts to him.—I would remind you of your duty.

1. You must faithfully explain and apply the oracles of God. The book of the law was in the custody of the priests. Some churches put the Bible into the hands of ministers when they ordain them, and very significantly. Search the Scriptures; take heed of misinterpreting them, of wresting them, 2 Pet. iii. 16, and of handling them deceitfully. You have a gospel to preach, not to make. Compare spiritual things with spiritual. In plain texts keep to the plain sense, and in difficult ones be modest.

2. You must faithfully administer the ordinances of Christ. The preaching of the word is his appointment, 2 Tim. iv. 2. Prepare for it; manage it as an ordinance of Christ, for your advancing of his honour and the interest of his kingdom, 2 Cor. iv. 5. Prayer is an ordinance of Christ; observe the intentions of it, to that, as well as to the word, you are to give

yourselves, Acts vi. 4. You are the people's mouth to God, and must declare to God all their concerns, as you must declare to them all God's counsel. The Lord's day is an ordinance of Christ; keep up the honour of it, that you may keep up the power of it. The sacraments are peculiarly ordinances of Christ: regard the institution, and adhere to it.

3. You must faithfully maintain the truths of the gospel: you are trusted with the custody of them, and must be able to convince gainsayers, and to give a reason for the hope which is in you, 1 Pet. iii. 15. Handle the truths of the gospel in your preaching as if they were not controverted, yet be furnished with answers to them that contradict. Betray not any truth of Christ by deserting it. Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, Jude 3. Christ's advocates shall never want instructions. Put on resolution. Set your face as a flint. You may speak as one having authority. Be jealous for the honour of the truth.

4. You must faithfully preside in religious assemblies. You must hold Christ's courts in his name, and not in your own; for his honour, and not for your own, Zech. iii. 7. Let every thing be done decently and in order, that an unbeliever may see God is with you, 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. The holy convocation is a divine appointment; do your part in it according as it is appointed for the glory of God's name, the keeping up the appearance of religion, and the promoting of Christian love; all which are earnest of heaven.

5. You must faithfully witness against sin, for it is God's enemy; you are his advocates. Bear your testimony against it, and against all appearances of it, and approaches towards it. In this manifest zeal, John ii. 17. and witness against evil wherever you see it. There are some that must be rebuked sharply. Suffer not sin upon them, lest you bear sin for them. Lev. xix. 17. Be bold for God, and not afraid of the face of man.

6. You must faithfully separate between the precious and the vile. You must distinguish in your preaching, that you may not strengthen the hands of the wicked, nor make the hearts of the righteous sad, Ezek. xiii. 22. In administering special ordinances, you must pay great attention to personal character. You must impart holy things to holy persons. You are a steward of these mysteries, 1 Cor. iv. 1. and you must consider what men really are.

7. You must faithfully comfort afflicted consciences. We give you a special charge of them, for Christ has a special care of them, Isa. xl. 1, 2. Use them tenderly, study how to speak a word in season to them, to heal their wounds, and yet not to heal them slightly. Teach them to fetch their comfort from Jesus Christ. Direct them to him, as their city of refuge. Show them the way. If they hearken not to you for anguish of spirit, yet continue.

8. You must faithfully intercede for the church and people of God. You are intrusted with this re, Isa. lxii. 6, 7. You are to bear Zion's interests much upon your heart. Public persons must of public spirits. The priests, the Lord's ministers, Joel ii. 17. Mal. i. 9. stand between the living and the dead. If they be prophets, let them pray, Jer. xvii. 18. It is every one's work, but yours especially. In religious assemblies, pray for all Christian congregations. Prize the communion of saints. 9. You must faithfully transmit that which is committed to you, to the rising generation. We charge you with the lambs of the flock; feed them, lead them into the green pastures. Christ has care of them, Isa. xl. 11. and expects you should. There is work for babes, in preaching, in visiting the families under your charge; you must be a teacher of babes, for Christ is, and he is one full of meekness and compassion.

And now, brother, you see what is committed to you. I hope these things do not make you repent your choice, or despair of going through with it. You now who can render you sufficient for these things, 1 Cor. ii. 16. Be animated by the greatness of the undertaking, and not disheartened.

III. Let me say something to quicken you; and I will also give me leave to transfer to myself, for I need it. Let me consider,

1. The things are of vast importance that I am employed about; dealing for an eternal God, with immortal souls, about their everlasting state. Those that are concerned about the lives and estates of their clients and clients, have need to be careful; much more those that are concerned about precious souls.

2. My Master's eye is always upon me. He sees when I trifle, or do his work deceitfully and carelessly. If I be slothful, and vain, and remiss, he knows it, or if I bury my talent. O that I could thank him always before me.

3. My time is very precious, and my day hastening to a period, 2 Pet. i. 13. John ix. 4. I have lost great deal of time, which I am concerned to redeem. I know not how little may be before me. I may die, and be silenced. Look into the grave, and be more diligent.

4. I have a great opportunity of doing good, if I be faithful, and of serving Christ, being a worker together with God. I may be the instrument of saving a soul from death, and of bringing sinners from darkness to light. It is good work I am about, more honourable than any other. I magnify my office, though ashamed of myself.

5. I must shortly give account, either with joy or grief, according as I am, or am not, faithful, Heb. xiii. 17. I am a watchman, and it will be awful if the blood of them that perish be required at my hand. How have I traded with my talent? and what will my doom be?

IV. Let me say something to encourage you.

1. You are employed in work in which God is working with you,—you do not fight uncertainly, 1 Cor. ix. 26. Mark xvi. 20. The word of God in your mouth shall accomplish that for which it is sent, Isa. lv. 11. it shall have the designed success, though not the desired success.

2. You shall find his grace sufficient for you, 2 Cor. xii. 9. If you go about your work in his strength, you shall receive strength, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. 1 Cor. xiv. 10. Christ has said to his ministers, Lo I am with you always. The Spirit was particularly promised to the disciples or ministers, to lead them into all truth, Phil. iv. 13.

3. We serve a Master, that if we be faithful to him, makes the best of us, and is not extreme to mark what we do amiss. Christ bore with his disciples, because they continued with him. We are under grace, and not under the law.

4. You have many encouraging examples before you. Our fathers bore their testimony to the grace of God. As God was with them, he will be with us. They were no better than his grace made them. We that have had our hands long at this work, will speak well of our Master and his work, though we have reason to be ashamed of ourselves.

5. Great will be your reward in heaven if you be faithful. You may meet with difficulties; you set out in a discouraging time; but let none of these things move you, 2 Tim. iv. 6—8. The souls you win, and the sufferings you bear, will be pearls in your crown.