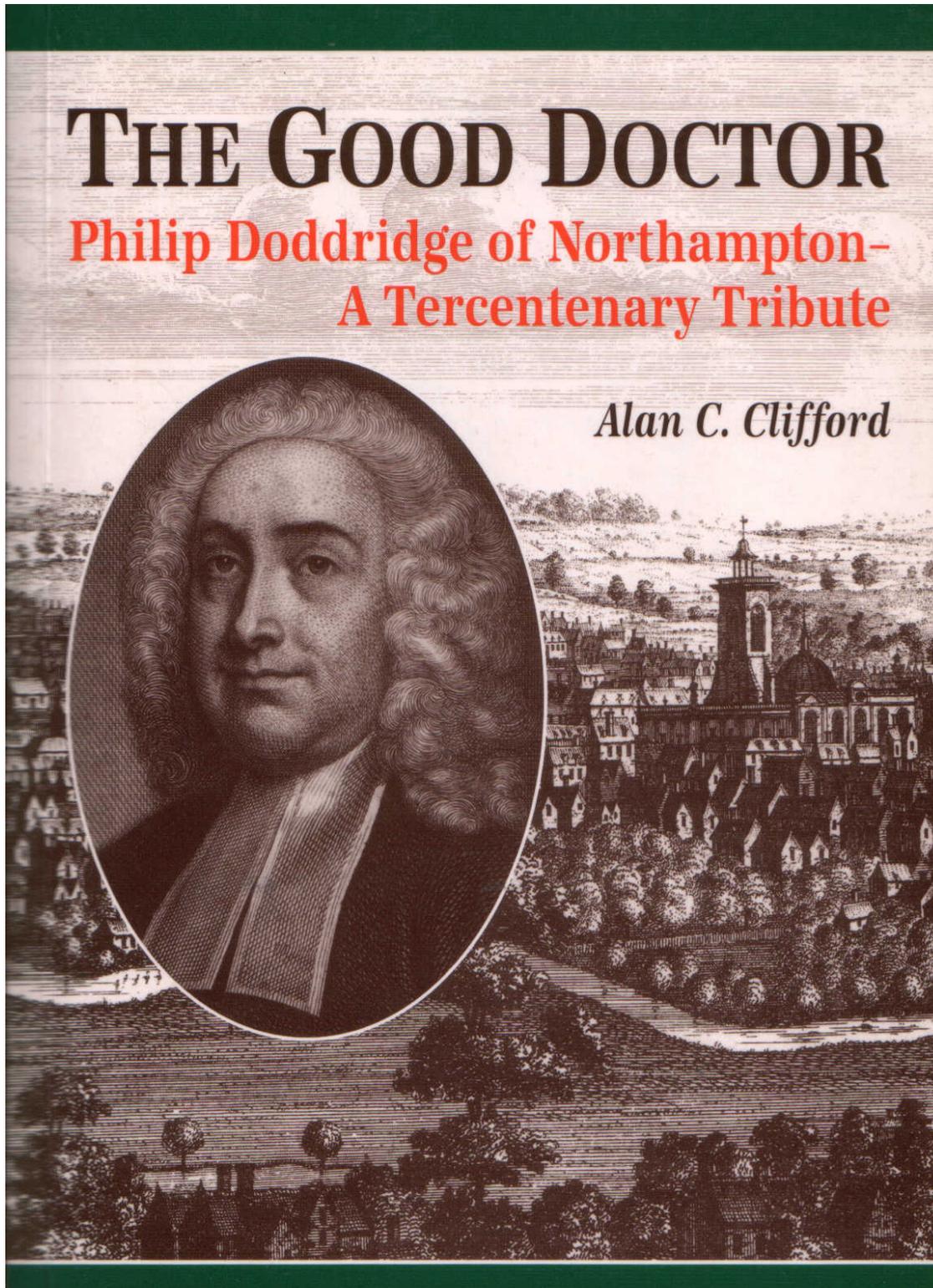


PHILIP DODDRIDGE IN NORFOLK

Dr Alan C. Clifford
Norwich Reformed Church



Introducing Doddridge

The age of John Wesley, George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards was also the age of Dr Philip Doddridge (1702-51). Remembered chiefly for his hymns, he was also a pastor, preacher, theologian, educator, author, philanthropist and patriot. A remarkable English Christian by any standard, Doddridge's faithful, fragrant and far-reaching testimony to Christ made him unique in his day. His obituary in the *Northampton Mercury* justly assessed his life. He was 'a man of fine genius. ... His piety was without disguise, his love without jealousy, his benevolence without bounds. ... In the several characters of a friend, a preacher, a writer, a tutor, he had few superiors: in all united, he had no equal'.

Doddridge's eminence

As well as his voluminous correspondence, the circulation of Doddridge's many publications reveal him as an international figure, held in high esteem by pastors and theologians of all the major Protestant churches in the Netherlands, Germany and in America, as well as the United Kingdom. He was also widely respected for the training programme of his academy in Northampton. As a consequence, preaching at the ordinations of his pupils took him to many parts of the United Kingdom. Doddridge's visits to East Anglia, and especially to Norfolk and Suffolk, produced numerous personal attachments which he highly valued. As early as 1727, during his own student days, he declined an invitation to consider the pastorate at Bradfield near North Walsham in Norfolk. After his settlement in Northampton in 1729, among his many pupils was Thomas Steffe, son of the Anglican rector of Wrentham in Suffolk.

The Old Meeting House, Norwich

Doddridge combined ordination duties with his summer vacations. Consequently, he made six visits to this area, in 1741, 1743, 1744, 1745, 1750 and 1751. Besides enjoying the rich fellowship of many in these parts, he clearly loved this region. His first visit in June 1741 brought him from Northampton to Bury St Edmunds where he preached. He proceeded from there to Norwich via Attleborough (where a change of horses took place). The highlight of this visit was a remarkable meeting which took place at Denton, Norfolk (near Bungay), an event we will consider in more detail shortly. He preached for his friend Thomas Scott, pastor of the Old Meeting House in Colegate, Norwich in June, 1744. Scott's godly daughter Elizabeth - described by her father as a 'Protestant nun' on account of her

charitable work - suffered from occasional 'melancholy'. She found relief and comfort in Doddridge's pastoral counselling. As a token of appreciation, Elizabeth made an apron for Doddridge's wife Mercy. After a three-day visit that July to Denton, he wrote from his minister friend Richard Frost's at Great Yarmouth, telling Mercy that 'Norfolk is one of the most elegant counties in England'. Writing shortly after from Kings Lynn, he told her that Castle Rising was 'the finest old ruin we have met with in all our travels'.

Doddridge's pupils

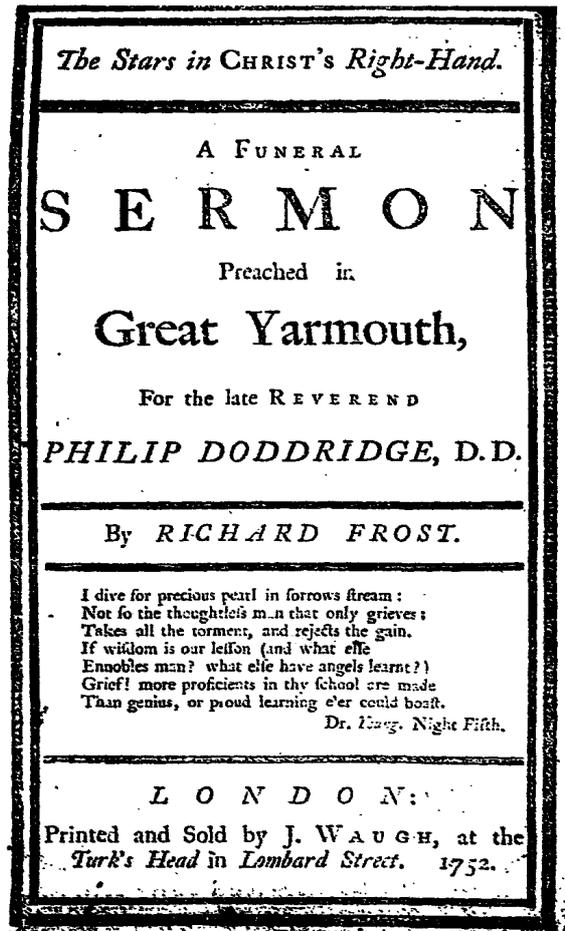
In 1745, Doddridge preached at the ordination of his former pupil Abraham Tozer, who became Scott's assistant. After Scott's death in 1746, his successor at the Old Meeting House was another pupil Samuel Wood of Rendham in Suffolk. Doddridge urged Wood to accept the call from Norwich, which he did in 1747. He and Tozer were joint pastors until Tozer returned to his native Devon, becoming a minister in Exeter in 1754. Judging by their correspondence, Wood and his former tutor had a particularly close attachment. Writing to Wood from Northampton in April 1748, Doddridge declared: 'Let twenty affairs lie by neglected...I will write to my dear friend Mr Wood'. After the death of the eminent Dr Isaac Watts in 1748 - Scott having died just two years before - Wood was apprehensive about the future. 'A [Matthew] Henry, a Watts, and a Doddridge, are not found in every age to bless the Church'. While Doddridge lived, the loss of others was more tolerable.

Doddridge's last visit to Norwich

Doddridge wrote to Richard Frost in 1749 expressing regret that he was unable to visit Norfolk that summer. Among other things, Doddridge shared encouraging news about his books. He was delighted that The Prince of Orange (William IV) had requested two dozen copies (in Dutch) of his *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul* (1745). In February 1750, Samuel Wood wrote that he looked forward to seeing Doddridge in these parts in the summer. This was to be his last visit to Norfolk. After returning to Northampton, Doddridge wrote to Samuel Wood in August expressing thanks for 'the numberless obligations heaped upon us all at Norwich'. Unlike Wood who couldn't attend, Richard Frost met and heard Doddridge for the last time at Sudbury in Suffolk in June 1751 on the occasion of William Hextall's ordination.

During the following months, Doddridge's health rapidly declined. Travelling to Lisbon via Bath and Falmouth in the hope that a warmer

climate might promote a recovery from his advanced TB, Philip Doddridge died on 26 October 1751. Notwithstanding their shared comfort in the Gospel, his friends were beside themselves with grief, none more so than Richard Frost who preached a special funeral sermon for Doddridge at Great Yarmouth, *The Stars in Christ's Right Hand* (1752). We now focus our attention on this man, whose sermon reminds us of something of Doddridge's spiritual impact in this area.



Doddridge and faithful Frost

As we have seen, the Revd Richard Frost was a Protestant Dissenting minister and one of Philip Doddridge's many Norfolk friends. He was the son of Richard Frost, a Norwich businessman. Born on 10 September, 1700 and educated at the Norwich Free School, his desire to study for the ministry was frustrated by the religious restrictions facing Dissenters during Queen Anne's time. Their liberties restored on the accession of George I in 1714, Richard studied for the ministry in London for three years under the Dissenting tutor Dr Thomas Ridgley. Attracted by the testimony of the Reformed churches in the Netherlands, he further studied at Utrecht and Leyden, returning to

England in 1726.

After preaching for a while at Bradfield, Richard was ordained at the Congregational church in Great Yarmouth in 1729. He was twice married. His first wife, Rebekah (by whom he had three children) died at Yarmouth in 1739. Four years later, he married Mary Marsh, daughter of Mr Justice Marsh of Norwich. Personal loss and the strain of his pastoral labours sadly contributed to a severe nervous breakdown in 1758. Resigning his pastorate soon afterwards, Richard Frost never recovered from his ailments. He died on 3 January 1778. His successor Thomas Howe preached a moving funeral sermon for him based on Psalm 97: 2, 'Clouds and darkness are round about him'.

Correspondence between Richard Frost and Philip Doddridge reveals a warm relationship. After their first meeting during a remarkable Association Meeting at Denton on 30 June 1741, the two men rode together to Yarmouth, where Doddridge preached on 2 July. Writing to his wife Mercy in Northampton, Doddridge expressed great delight in Frost's 'discourse'. Their friendship continued for the remainder of Doddridge's life. As we have seen, only a few months before his death at Lisbon in October 1751, Doddridge preached at the ordination of another of his pupils, William Hextal, at Sudbury in Suffolk. Present in the congregation, Frost - later regretting he had made no notes of the sermon - and Doddridge met again for the last time on earth, a fellowship they happily resumed in heaven.

Revival Experience at Denton

What was special about this meeting at Denton? It was an assembly of 'The Associated Protestant Dissenting Ministers in the Counties of Norfolk and Suffolk' where Doddridge outlined his concerns for revival and missionary enterprise. By all accounts, this was an extraordinary occasion, as Richard Frost made clear in his funeral sermon for Doddridge:

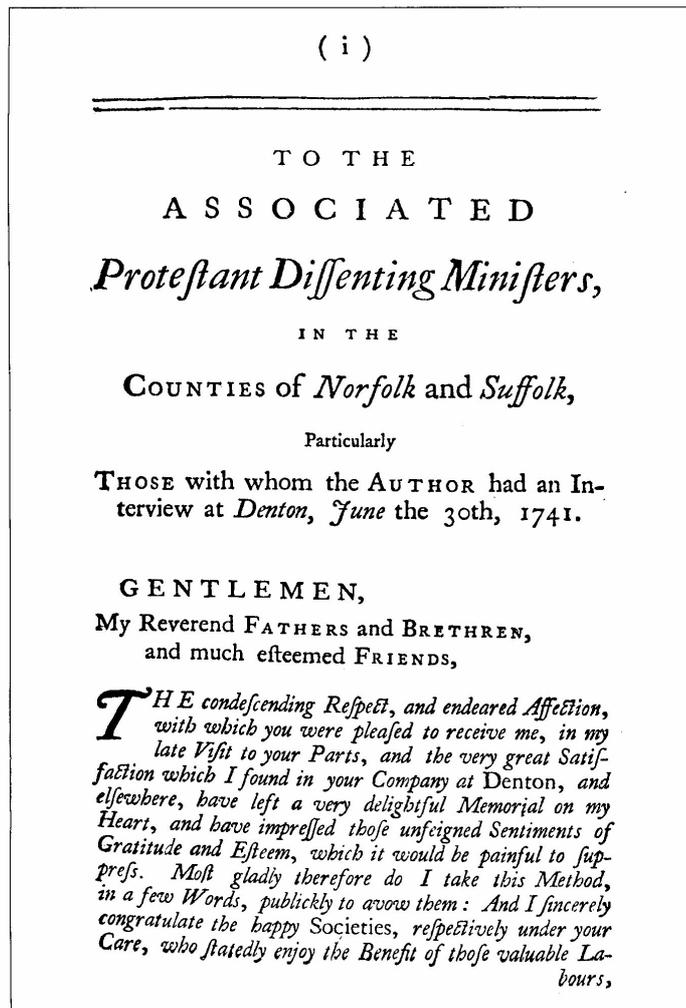
A remarkable day indeed, when the presence of God filled our assembly; and not myself only, but many others have with pleasure owned it was one of the best days of our lives. Though the season was hot, the auditory very much crowded, and between four and five hours spent in public worship, none thought the hours tedious and wished for a dismissal.

Of this occasion, Doddridge likewise wrote to Mercy:

We spent Tuesday [June 30] at Denton & it was one of the most

delightful Days of my whole life. Seventeen Ministers were there of whom 8 officiated indeed excellently well. We held a Kind of Council afterward concerning the Methods to be taken for the Revival of Religion & I hope I have set them on Work to some good purpose.

One scheme led to another. So, in October 1741, Doddridge preached a remarkable sermon at Kettering in Northamptonshire during another meeting of ministers. Dedicated to 'The Associated Protestant Dissenting Ministers in the Counties of Norfolk and Suffolk', it was published the following February with the title *The Evil and Danger of Neglecting the Souls of Men*. John Stoughton, Doddridge's third biographer, is of the opinion that this work is worthy of a place alongside Baxter's *Reformed Pastor*, an 'incomparable treatise' according to Doddridge and so much admired by him. Indeed, both works continue to command the attention of the twenty-first century Church. Time taken in studying them today would be well spent. Here is the original dedication page of Doddridge's *Evil and Danger of Neglecting the Souls of Men*:



Doddridge and world mission

When Doddridge published his Kettering sermon in 1742, it included the proposals he advanced at Denton the previous June *plus* supplementary ones agreed at Kettering and among his own Northampton congregation. Concerned with ‘the propagation of the kingdom of Christ in the world’, it was proposed that ‘petitions’ be ‘put up’ to ‘the throne of grace’ for ‘the advancement of the gospel in the world, and for the success of all the faithful servants of Christ, who are engaged in the work of it, especially among the heathen nations’. Predating by fifty years the vision of the pioneer Baptist missionary William Carey, Dr Ernest Payne believes that the enthusiasm of Doddridge and his brethren probably influenced Carey, who, born at Paulersbury in Northants ten years after Doddridge’s death, possibly read Doddridge’s Kettering sermon.

We must see the faithful labours of Doddridge and his Norfolk & Suffolk friends in the context of the great Methodist revival of the eighteenth century, more properly called ‘The Great Evangelical Awakening’. They, by God’s grace, played their part in a revival of Christianity in this nation, the full benefits of which were felt in the next century. As the Protestant, Reformed and Evangelical churches were revived, the entire spiritual, moral and cultural tone of the country was raised. It had powerful social and political benefits too. Let us not forget that it was Philip Doddridge’s *Rise & Progress* that was used by God in the conversion of William Wilberforce, the great champion in the abolition of slavery. All this history, full of the enriching relationships true Christian fellowship creates, should move us to pray that God will revive us again!

ADDENDUM

Now follows the complete text of Philip Doddridge’s sermon preached at the Old Meeting House, Norwich at the Ordination of Abraham Tozer in 1745.

IT MAY BE AFFIRMED THAT THIS ‘SCRIPTURE-SOAKED’ SERMON, UNDER THE BLESSING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, COULD CONTRIBUTE TO A NEW REVIVAL OF AUTHENTIC CHRISTIANITY.

Encouraging the modern reader to persevere with the preacher’s elegant eighteenth-century style, it is prayerfully presented to that end.

A PASTOR'S PROFILE¹

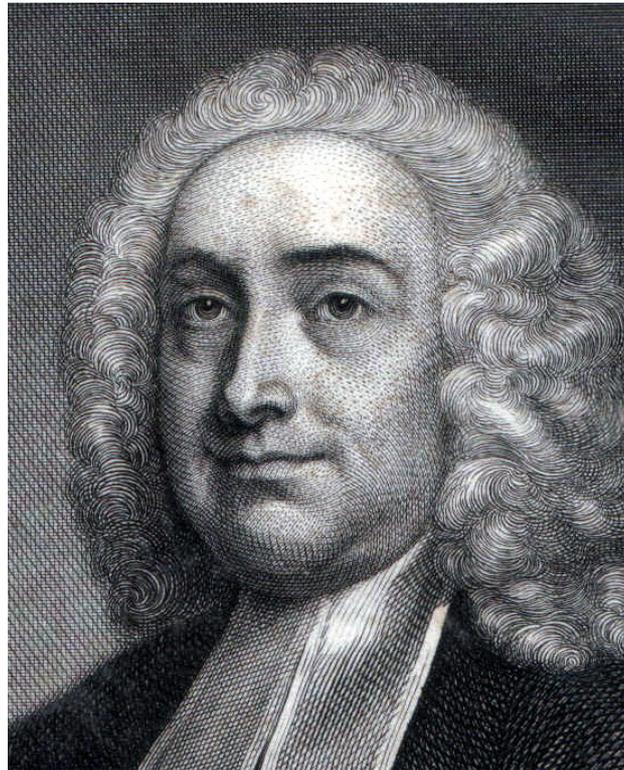
OR

MINISTERIAL CONGRATULATIONS, ADMONITIONS AND ENCOURAGEMENTS²

Dr Philip Doddridge

(1702-51)

Edited by Dr Alan C. Clifford



A CHARGE

Delivered at Norwich, at the Ordination of

¹ This brief title has been selected by the editor.

² Extracted from *The Works of the Rev. P. Doddridge, D. D.* (Leeds, 1803), iii. 209-28.

the Reverend Mr. Abraham Tozer
on June 20th, 1745.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

WHEN I consider the rational and edifying manner in which the solemnities of ordination days amongst us are adjusted and conducted, and recollect what I hope I may justly call the various and delightful tokens of the divine presence in our assemblies on such occasions, I cannot but esteem it my happiness to have been an attendant on so many of them. My memory goes back with joy to many former years, in each of which Providence has given me, in one part of our country or another, to see young ministers, who have a *Good report of all men, and of the truth itself*,³ after having approved themselves to Christian societies, generally by some considerable series of probationary labours, unanimously chosen by the respective churches, and invited to the pastoral office over them without one dissenting voice. With delight have I heard their faithful and affectionate testimony to the great truths of the gospel, in judicious summaries of the Christian religion, drawn up by them in such expressions as they freely chose, without the imposition of human forms; summaries which, in this connexion, I must acknowledge to have been in the number of the most affecting and edifying public discourses. If I have ever known the spirit of prayer poured forth, as in a kind of celestial torrent, to add at once dignity, sanctity, and transport to our assemblies, it has been on such occasions; and the exhortations of my brethren in their sermons and charges, have often been the means of humbling, of melting, and of animating my soul.

The present pleasure attending these sacred hours, the religious improvement received from what has passed in them, the cheering prospect which they give relating to the church in future years, and even in generations yet to come,

³ 3 John 12

do all concur to demand my thankfulness, that I have so often on such seasons been called to *Go with the multitude to the house of God*.⁴ But I will freely own, the enjoyment has often been abated by the obligation I have been under to officiate, not only in some public work, but especially in the part which is now devolved upon me. Nor should I, after having delivered so many charges, as well as opened my heart so fully to you, dear Sir, in a more private manner, on almost every subject relating to the ministry, know how to set myself with any spirit to what must be in a great measure a repetition of former things; if I did not recollect, that what is immediately addressed to one's self, in the midst of such peculiar solemnities, may have some singular weight, beyond what the same thing would have in a more private address, or if thus publicly offered to another person. And therefore I persuade myself, you will hear me with all attention and regard, while I give a little vent to the fulness of my heart, in such fraternal congratulations, admonitions, and encouragements, as may suit the present occasion, and may, by the divine blessing, be of some service to you, and my other beloved and honoured brethren, who are sharing in the honours, the labours, and the burthens of this evangelical ministry, to the full exercise of which you have now been solemnly called and set apart.

I. Let me most cordially and affectionately congratulate you, my dear brother, that you have now been thus publicly called and devoted to the ministerial and pastoral office.

Paul esteemed it matter of most joyful reflection, when he said, *I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, that he hath counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry*.⁵ And I thank him from my soul, as the great head of the church, that he is still raising a succession of those who are to bear it, and that

⁴ Psalm 42: 4

⁵ 1 Timothy 1: 12

you, dear Sir, are numbered among them. I most heartily congratulate you on the honour,-the pleasure,-and the usefulness, of that station of life, on which you now enter.

1. I congratulate you on the honour of your office.

For with whatever contempt ignorant and profane men may treat it, it is highly honourable in its simplest forms, and needs none of the external ornaments which men can hang about it, to render it so. If it be honourable to be (though confessedly in a lower sense than the title was applicable to the apostles) *An ambassador of Christ, and a man of God*, you have that honour. If it be honourable to sustain the highest trust that can, in the methods of common providence, be reposed in mortal man, even to have *The glorious gospel of the blessed God committed to our charge*,⁶ and to be made guardians of souls which are to exist for ever:- if it be honourable to bear an office which was sanctified by Christ, who himself bore it, and by bearing it has dignified it for ever; an office, which is mentioned in the sacred oracles as the great gift of Christ to his church; as the immediate, though not the ultimate, end of the most visible and extraordinary effusion of his Spirit: for *When he ascended up on high, and led captivity captive, he gave gifts unto men; and distributed the royal donative, giving first apostles, then prophets, then evangelists, then pastors and teachers; that by it holy men might be perfectly fitted for the work of the ministry, that so the body of Christ, that is, his whole church, might be edified*,⁷ or *built up*:⁸ Rejoice, that your name is now (as it were) inserted in the catalogue of these his servants, and reflect frequently on the honour; not to be exalted above measure, but to be awakened and animated to a dignity and sanctity of behaviour correspondent to it.

⁶ 1 Timothy 1: 11

⁷ Ephesians 4: 8, 11, 12

⁸ This version I think the original [Greek] words will bear.

2. Let me also congratulate you on the pleasures of that office on which you are entered.

For pleasures mingle themselves amidst all its labours and difficulties, all its reproaches and its persecutions; yea, when duly executed, it is a series of pleasures. Pleasures will meet you in your secret retirements; they will attend you here in the house of your God; they will follow you to the house of your friends; they will crown all your days, and above all, your sabbaths: and these, rational, pure, sublime pleasures, which the man may approve, the Christian relish, and which, did angels dwell in human flesh, they surely would pursue.

Must it not necessarily be pleasant to a devout heart, and God forbid that any other should here be in question! to give itself up in secret to the contemplation of divine things, to search the rich mines of Scripture, to investigate the glorious mysteries with which they are pregnant, and *Which angels stoop down that they may look into?*⁹ to compare one part of the sacred oracles with another, that each may be illustrated by the comparison? to discover, I will not say new doctrines of importance, for I persuade myself God has not left his Christian church to learn them in these last days, but new illustrations of the great and acknowledged truths of the gospel, new beauties in the arrangement and expressions of particular texts, new methods of touching the hearts of men, by truths already familiar to their ear?

What can be more delightful also, than to rise up to lead the public devotions of a worshipping assembly? to spread before the blessed God, in their name, and our own, prayers and supplications, intercessions and thanksgivings? to remind them of the divine mercy? to proclaim among them the everlasting gospel, animated with a secret hope, while meditating in private, while speaking in the assembly, that

⁹ 1 Peter 1: 12

by the divine blessing, the knowledge and love of God in a Redeemer may be shed abroad on some ignorant and wretched soul, hitherto destitute of it; and in many other instances, that truly Christian sentiments may be kept alive in hearts that have already received them, and be transmitted from the present to the next generation?

Nor can any subjects of conversation administer a nobler delight in the houses of your friends, than those which will naturally fall before you, as a minister. For if religion add so much sweetness and endearment to friendship, when contracted between persons of the most private characters, it must much more do it in such instances; where past ministerial services may be recollected, where the fruits of them may be made apparent, and the man of God more abundantly furnished for the future discharge of his office, in the most suitable, and therefore the most edifying, manner. Which naturally leads me,

3. To congratulate you on that prospect of usefulness, which this happy day may open upon you.

It is true, that how well so ever we may be furnished for the ministry, and how agreeably so ever we are placed in it, we must not hope, that our success will be universal; hardly can we flatter ourselves? that it will be general. What are we *Better than our fathers?*¹⁰ Or how comparable to our Master, that we should never complain with them, and even with him, that we *Labour in vain, and spend our strength for nought?*¹¹ Yet we can ourselves witness, from what we have seen, and from what we have felt, the blessing that hath attended the ministry of others. And I trust, that even those of us, who are least advanced in life, least experienced in the work, have already been favoured with some seals of our ministry, some who are as *letters of recommendation*,

¹⁰ 1 Kings 19: 4

¹¹ Isaiah 49: 4-

*written as it were by the hand of Christ himself;*¹² and that you, Sir, will be thus honoured. O that it might be abundantly! Yes, I trust, God will give you to convert many. And if it were but one, who can express the happiness of saving one soul from death, of conducting one immortal creature to life and glory everlasting?

You will also, I doubt not, edify many by every public prayer you offer, and by every sermon you preach. Your words, proceeding from your own heart, will reach the hearts of others, and rekindle the languishing flame of devotion. Every virtue and every grace will, I hope, flourish under your cultivation; while you strengthen, with renewed exhortations, every good resolution already formed: and the rising generation, growing up under your care, in concurrence with that of pious parents whom you animate to the important charge of their education, will, by insensible degrees, be furnished with the knowledge of religion, and brought, not only to the speculation, but to the sentiments and practice, of it. So that while others have, it may be, their bags, their houses, their furniture, and their fields, to show as the effect of their labours; you will have captives of Satan, rescued from his tyranny, adopted into the family of God, and honoured with the privileges of his children, crowding his courts, and surrounding his table, as the infinitely more valuable fruits of yours. You will see the character of Christians brightening from sabbath to sabbath, under your evangelical and practical instructions; their blemishes wearing out, and their graces contracting (as by exercise they will contract) more strength and more beauty continually.

God will also undoubtedly give you, to wipe the weeping eye, to cheer the mourning heart; to be his instrument in taking off the burthen from tender depressed spirits; in which number you will sometimes find those, who may (if any in

¹² 2 Corinthians 3: 1, 3

the world may) be justly called *The excellent of the earth*.¹³ Christ. The great Lord of the church, will in many instances make you (as it were) the almoner of his bounty, and messenger of his love; while he is *giving to them that mourn in Zion, beauty for ashes*, and sending them *the garments of praise* in exchange for *the spirit of heaviness*.¹⁴ Your kind offices, and the happy effects of them, will attend your friends, not only in all the darkest hours of preceding affliction, but even on their dying beds. There will you animate their faith; there will you be a *helper of their joy*;¹⁵ and furnish the hand of the departing pilgrim with the promises of God as a sure staff, to support him in his way through all the gloomy horrors of the last valley, by which he must pass to the New Jerusalem.

By such traces of usefulness will you mark, as it were, the several years, and months, and days of life; while the passage of so many others through it is like that of an arrow through the trackless air: until at length you die with a pleasing consciousness, that you have not lived in vain, and rise to rewards never to be described by mortal voice, never to be conceived by the human heart, and of which I must not say any thing more now, as I am briefly to touch upon them in the concluding part of my discourse.

Now while you have these things in view, do you not, my brother, congratulate yourself upon this happy occasion? I am persuaded you do. I am persuaded, that your heart is even now bowing itself in secret thankfulness before God, that he hath honoured you with capacities for this work; that he hath furnished you with the means of a proper education for it; and that his providence has at length called you out to it. Nor can your gratitude forget his distinguished goodness in settling you with so generous, so affectionate,

¹³ Psalm 16: 3

¹⁴ Isaiah 61: 3

¹⁵ 2 Corinthians 1: 24

and so pious a people, and now in the bonds of joint-pastorship with that faithful and venerable servant of Christ, with whom you share the office.¹⁶ You will, I doubt not, *Serve with him, as a son with a father, in the gospel*¹⁷ of Christ. Nor can the warmest friendship form a greater wish for you, than that you may learn by the daily opportunities of conversing with him, to improve more and more in that rich variety of Christian and ministerial graces, which have for a long series of years rendered his name so honourable in our churches, and his flock so peculiarly happy. O that I could also congratulate you, and them, on returning and continued opportunities of learning, as formerly, by his public labours. In the mean time, permit me with these cordial congratulations to intermingle,

II. Some faithful admonitions, relating to the labours,- the difficulties, - the oppositions, attending the station of life on which you are entered, - and the solemn account in which it is to terminate.

Of these indeed you have just now been reminded by my dear and honoured brother, in so judicious and in so pathetic a manner, that it is the less necessary for me to enlarge upon them. Yet were they to be wholly omitted by me in this discourse, it could hardly be called a charge; and, I fear, it is a subject, on which we all need *Line upon line, and precept upon precept*.¹⁸ Let me therefore solemnly, though briefly, remind you,

1. Of the labours, that attend this situation of life.

These indeed are such, as will demand an almost uninterrupted attention of mind, and vigour of diligence.

¹⁶ The Reverend Mr. Thomas Scott, senior [d. 1746].

¹⁷ Philippians 2: 22

¹⁸ [Isaiah 28: 10]

Labours await you at home and abroad: - labours on your own days, and on the sabbath; a day of rest to others, but to you of the most strenuous, though most delightful, service :-labours in the study; that knowledge may be increased; that provision may be made for public ministrations, with solidity, with perspicuity, with propriety, with energy, with tenderness: - labours in the pulpit; that public devotions may be suitably and fervently poured out before God; and sermons so delivered, as, if possible, to command the attention of the auditory, and to communicate, in a natural and effectual manner, those good affections to others which you feel in your own breast. - Not to mention the labours to be gone through in visiting your friends, and in the exercise of that prudent personal and domestic inspection, which you must necessarily attend to, if you would approve yourself a skilful, yea I will add, if you would approve yourself a faithful, shepherd. - What a combination on the whole! Labours of the head, labours of the voice; but oh, above all, labours of the heart! For this is indeed the labour: to fix on our own inconstant spirits a becoming habitual sense of God; to feel always in our own breast those pious affections, which it is our business to endeavour to raise in others; in a word, to keep the sacred flame of love to God, to Christ, and to the souls of men, ever burning, yea, ever glowing, with an intenseness of heat proportionable to the number and nature of those sacrifices, which are daily, which are hourly, to be presented ! - Help, Lord, or it will soon be extinguished! Feed it continually by thy celestial stream; or, *Who is sufficient for these things?*¹⁹ - You will surely say so, when you consider,

2. The difficulties attending your work, of which I am next to admonish you.

But here, as indeed under the former head, your own experience must already have done it in the most

¹⁹ 2 Corinthians 2: 16

convincing manner. You find the ministry a work that requires not only patient industry but wise conduct and happy address. Difficulties meet us in the closet, even when our own minds are competently furnished with divine knowledge, so as to adjust the composition of our discourses, as that the understanding of our hearers may be enlightened, their conscience convinced, and their affections impressed; that the ignorant may be instructed, that the careless may be awakened, that the hypocrite may be detected, that the mourner may be comforted, the dejected revived, the backslider restored, the confirmed Christian yet more established; in a word, that every one may have his *Portion of meat in due season*,²⁰ and every one, so far as may be, according to his own taste too; at least, that what we say, while it is intelligible to the meanest, may not be justly contemptible to the more refined, but that things and *Words* may be *sought out*, so far as faithfulness will permit, *acceptable*²¹ to both. And how hard is it to unite all these views, especially amidst such a diversity of sentiments, as well as circumstances! And this, not only where those are in question, who have apparently *Made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience*,²² and whom in some respects it might be infamy to please; but even where, among the best of men, different apprehensions of things, conscientiously received and retained, will lead one to disrelish what another most wishes to hear, and possibly in some instances, one to censure even because another applauds.

It may on all these accounts, and many others, be difficult to instruct, and it will be still more difficult to reprove. General hints given in public will by guilty consciences be interpreted as personal reflections, and perhaps aggravated into open abuse, and occasions of declared enmity; and

²⁰ Luke 12: 42

²¹ Ecclesiastes 12: 10

²² 1 Timothy 1: 19

private applications will be evaded, discouraged, and very probably resented. The corruptions of the heart will rise against the most friendly efforts of cure and those wounds which most absolutely require a deep search, will be least patient even under the gentlest touch. Your solicitude to please God will, in many instances, displease men. Your heart will be grieved by many unsuccessful labours. And to close the melancholy scene, you will probably see some, of whom you had very agreeable hopes, falling away from all regard to serious religion; and perhaps may find yourself obliged, though with a reluctant heart, to bear your part in separating some from your communion, whom you gathered into it with the greatest joy, and in whom you blessed yourself as the seals of your ministry.

These are the difficulties which may arise from within; and besides these, the prejudices of the world will lie strongly against you from without. Many eyes will be upon you, to observe your conduct. By some your slips will be magnified into crimes; and if you walk so cautiously, though who can promise himself that he shall, as to escape any just blame, malice will create occasions of censure, perhaps in some instances even from your solicitude to avoid it. Your zeal will be called bigotry, and your candour hypocrisy; your humility affectation; and your activity will be imputed, either to a high opinion of your own abilities, or to a vain desire of outshining others, or to a low pursuit of popularity from arrogant or interested principles. Such treatment have the best of men found; and such must you expect, unless Satan lose his influence over the world by much swifter degrees than we have any warrant to hope that he will. But this naturally leads me to warn you,

3. Of the oppositions which you may meet with in your ministry.

These may indeed in different circumstances, be more or less extreme; but something of this kind is at all events to be expected, and it will be our wisdom to provide against

the worst. *Gird up therefore the loins of your mind.*²³ Remember, that you are *Putting on your harness;*²⁴ and God only knows to what combats you may be called.

We have long enjoyed halcyon days, through the favour of Providence, and the equity of our civil governors; to whom, I hope, we are grateful for it, as we ought. But He that rules in the heavens can only say, how soon clouds may gather, and how soon tempests of thunder and lightning may burst upon us. Sometimes, you know, a storm arises on a sudden, and the deadness of the preceding calm increases both its terror and its strength. So sinful a people as we must confess ourselves to be, can never have reason to wonder at any public and national calamity, which may break in upon us in a moment. But should circumstances more gradually change, you, Sir, and our younger brethren, may live to see an *Enemy in the sanctuary of the Lord;*²⁵ may live to see our religious liberties trampled under foot, and with them undoubtedly our civil, for they are twins that will live and die together. You may perhaps be called to *resist unto blood,*²⁶ to glorify God in the flames, and to teach your flock Christian courage and fidelity, not by words, but by martyrdom. Such things you may suffer, as a Protestant, as a Christian.

And more peaceful times have their trials too, though perhaps not equally severe. I do indeed hope, that mutual love is growing, among the various denominations of Christians, and particularly between us, and our brethren of the establishment. And may the blessings of the God of peace rest on the men who cultivate it, on both sides! - But we cannot hope to see the time, when all shall be so moderate and so equitable, as not to think and judge with

²³ 1 Peter 1: 13

²⁴ 1 Kings 20: 11

²⁵ Psalm 74: 3

²⁶ Hebrews 12: 4

some severity of those, whose conscience obliges them, though in the modestest manner, to maintain different forms of worship and discipline, even where the great articles of faith are the same. - And a different judgment relating to the articles of faith may draw down yet severer censures and opposition, from those whose judgment in worship and discipline agrees ever so well. - And I must faithfully warn you, Sir, that if you go on to assert, as I hope you always will, those great doctrines of the gospel to which you have now borne a public testimony, I particularly mean the Deity and Atonement of Christ, the ruin of our nature by the original apostasy, and our restoration by the agency of the blessed Spirit; you are not to imagine, that any I moderation of temper, or any other personal virtue, or all your zeal for the service of the common cause of Christians, Protestants, or Dissenters, will atone for what some will imagine so great a crime; or shelter you from the affected contempt and severe reproaches of some angry people, who amidst all their professions of the most unbounded charity will think yours an excepted case, or will rather choose to be injurious to you than consistent with themselves. - But *It is after all a very small matter to be judged of man's judgment: he that judgeth us is the Lord:*²⁷ and that is the most solemn thought of all, concerning which I am lastly to admonish you, even,

4. The awful account which you are shortly to give up to him, from whom you have received your ministry.

*We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ;*²⁸ and if he account with the meanest of his servants, we may assure ourselves, he will do it with his stewards. And let us remember, that when the books are opened, it will not only be found upon record there, that such a congregation was at such a time committed to this or that minister; but a

²⁷ 1 Corinthians 4: 3-4

²⁸ 2 Corinthians 5: 10

particular register will in effect be produced of every soul consigned to our care: So many heads of families, together with such children, and such servants. And then our conduct will be reviewed, and examination made, "how far we have answered our trust. Should it be found, that we have neglected and abused it, the displeasure of our great Lord and Master will rise in proportion to its importance, and to the opportunities we have had of doing good in it: opportunities which, though we may not perhaps so thoroughly examine, as to conceive of their full extent, he most circumstantially knows. And surely, if it be then found, as it undoubtedly will, a fatal thing to have betrayed the bodies or the estates of men, when committed to our care; much more will it be so, to have betrayed, and by betraying to have destroyed, so far as in us lay, immortal souls. This is a matter of such weight, that when we seriously think of it, and compare it with those criminal neglects, which conscience will charge even on the best of us, there is just reason for us with one voice to cry out, *Enter not into judgment with thy servants, O Lord; for in thy sight can none of us be justified.*²⁹ And when you, my brother, think of it, in such a moment as this, you may find your heart ready to fail; and even may be tempted to draw back, and say, *Who shall stand to minister before this holy Lord God?*³⁰ *Lest he break forth upon us, and we die.*³¹ But I would not leave you under the distress of such a view, and therefore conclude,

III. With a few hints addressed to you by way of encouragement, to animate you to go forth with courage and cheerfulness, notwithstanding these awful views which I have been giving you of your office.

²⁹ Psalm 143: 2

³⁰ 1 Samuel 6: 20

³¹ Exodus 19: 24

And, through the goodness of our divine Master, I have many considerations of great importance to urge here. As,

1. That you have an unerring rule in the word of God, from whence your instructions, admonitions, and directions, are to be drawn.

You well know, that *Scripture was given* for this end, *that the man of God*, that is, the christian minister, *might be perfected, thoroughly furnished to every good work*,³² various as the good works of his office are. The best of human writings have their defects and their blemishes; but in this respect, as well as others, it is true, that, *As for God, his way is perfect, and the word of the Lord is tried*.³³ When we read the most excellent moral and religious writings of the heathens, we find a great deal of error and superstition, which mingles compassion with our admiration. When we read the merely human writings of the most celebrated ancient and modern divines, there is much to exercise our caution and our candour. As for any new theological hypothesis, we generally find, on a more accurate examination, the proofs of its falsehood, proportionable to the confidence with which it is advanced, and the importance to which it pretends. And where men write with the greatest caution and modesty, though such generally err the least, yet there is something defective, or something redundant; something unguarded, or something overstrained: so that, though they may be useful companions in our journey, we dare not commit ourselves to any one of them as our guide; and they often differ so much among themselves as to increase our perplexity, and indeed to give us painful apprehensions as to our safety, or theirs; did we not recollect, that various paths, after having divided a while, may so run into each other, as to lead to the same place, though some may be more direct than others. But of Scripture it may be said, as of its great

³² 2 Timothy 3: 16-17

³³ Psalm 18: 30

Original, that in it *There is perfect light, and no darkness at all.*³⁴ O how happy are you that have, in so small a bulk, the oracles of eternal truth, and particularly the volume of the New Testament, which may so easily be carried about with you, to entertain you abroad as well as at home; to talk with you *When you lie down and when you rise up;*³⁵ to be the *Man of your counsel*³⁶ when you are preparing to instruct your flock in public, and more privately to guide and advise them in the most intricate circumstances This is like the pillar of fire, to direct your way amidst the darkest night; and like the pillar of cloud, to refresh your soul amidst the most painful labours and most scorching heats. Let it be followed faithfully; and you, and that part of the Israel of God over which you preside, will be happily conducted through all the windings, through all the fatigues, of the wilderness, till your feet and theirs stand upon Mount Zion. Consult it, my dear brother, and reverence it as you ought; and you will be safe, not only under the shelter and guard of aged wisdom, but in every change that can be apprehended or imagined.

2. You have also for your encouragement the daily prayers of many, whom you have reason to think not destitute of an interest at the throne they address.

You have your share, I trust, in all the prayers which are daily put up by the church, under its various forms, for all the faithful ministers of Christ; but you may assure yourself, that you are more particularly and distinctly remembered by your Christian friends, to whom you are related in ministerial bonds. You need that remembrance; and they consider that you need it. In their families, in their closets, they see not a day in which they do not supplicate earnestly (or the blessing of God on your person, your

³⁴ 1 John 1: 5

³⁵ Deuteronomy 6: 7

³⁶ Psalm 119: 24 [Heb]

studies, and your labours. When you come to them in the house of God, you may consider yourself (if you will pardon the expression) as raised on the wing of their prayers; and may hope to experience, in answer to them, some new unction from above. How great an encouragement, amidst the daily consciousness of our own unworthiness! whether we consider it as testifying their love, and so securing in a great measure their candour to us; or as effectual to obtain those fresh supplies of divine assistance, which they have sought. Nor can I conclude this head without saying, that it is happy when the minister, amidst all his various cares, is as constant, as earnest, and as affectionate, in praying for the whole people committed to his care, as many a pious, and, it may be, obscure Christian, in each of our assemblies is, in striving with God for a blessing on his minister.

3. You may also expect the countenance, esteem, and friendship, of all good men that thoroughly know you.

I put in this limitation, because the misrepresentations of character which ignorance and malice may draw, often alienate the minds of very deserving people from each other; so that they turn away with some distaste from they know not whom, or what. But where a valuable character is known, (and that of a faithful minister will always be such,) it must command esteem and affection; and prejudices which had been conceived against it, will melt away before the radiancy of it, like snow before the sun. Be diligent and resolute in the execution of your office, and you will find favour, and good acceptance, in the eyes of God, and of worthy men; and perhaps, should your reputation be aspersed by the ignorant and the malicious, you may find that Providence will exert itself to *Bring forth your righteousness as the light*, and your honour, as well as *your salvation, as a lamp that burneth*.³⁷ You will be sure of a peculiar share in the affection and veneration of the flock over which you preside. They will look upon you, as the gift

³⁷ Isaiah 62: 1

of God to the society: they will consider you, as, in some measure, the representative of our Lord Jesus Christ himself; of whom every faithful minister is indeed a living image. They will therefore *Esteem you very highly in love for your work's sake*.³⁸ The maintenance they give you, will be cheerfully offered in proportion to their respective abilities, as the tribute of gratitude, and the pledge of endearment. Your affliction will be the common grief, and your prosperity their joy; and each of them will look upon himself as obliged in duty to approve himself the guardian of your character, and of your peace. Their hearts, as well as their houses, will be open to you; their countenances will tell you, better than any words can do it, how welcome you are to them; and every proper token of respect will be cordial, in proportion to the degree in which it is unconstrained. And where this is the case, you will have no cause to envy any dignities or revenues, which mere power may command, but which no superior splendour and abundance can render equally sweet. Above all must it encourage you, to reflect,

4. That you have the promise of your Master's presence, and may trust in him for the communication of his Spirit.

He hath told his ministers, *He will be with them always, even unto the end of the world*:³⁹ and you may rest on the veracity of a word, that shall continue, *though heaven and earth shall pass away*.⁴⁰ Christ will meet you; Christ will strengthen you. He will feed and cheer your soul; that you may be enabled to feed and to cheer those that he has committed to your care. It is not a mere empty sound: your brethren, and your fathers, among whom you stand this day, can from their own experience attest the truth of the promise. He has softened our fatigues; he has sweetened

³⁸ 1 Thessalonians 5: 13

³⁹ Matthew 28: 20

⁴⁰ Luke 16: 17

our afflictions; and carried us with songs in our mouths through scenes, at the very distant prospect of which we should have trembled. *Having obtained help from him, we continue even to this day,*⁴¹ the living, the cheerful witnesses of his power, his goodness, and his faithfulness. *Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*⁴² And remember,

5. That in consequence of this, you may expect such considerable improvements in personal religion, as shall be a rich equivalent for all your labours, and for all you can resign for the ministry, or suffer in it.

It must be nourishing to the soul, if it be spiritually alive, to be so continually conversant with spiritual and divine things. Your meditations, your prayers, your public discourses, your private converses on religious subjects and occasions, together with the administration of both the sacraments, will all have a great tendency, under a divine blessing, to make good impressions on your own heart, and to advance you in a holy and devout temper. While you are thus daily *Watering others, you will be watered yourself;*⁴³ as I doubt not but you will remember, that while you *Teach others, you teach yourself also.*⁴⁴ While the daily cares of others in their secular callings, have an apparent tendency to divert their minds from God, yours will tend directly to him, and give you advantages, beyond what can easily be imagined, by being *Continually with him;*⁴⁵ such advantages indeed, that, were the nature and the value of them sufficiently known, men would be ready to contend for the ministry, as for a sacred prize. They would esteem it among the greatest privileges of a plentiful estate, that it might give

⁴¹ Acts 26: 22

⁴² 2 Timothy 2: 1

⁴³ Proverbs 11: 25

⁴⁴ Romans 2: 21

⁴⁵ Psalm 73: 23

them opportunities of being educated for it, and of being independent in it; while that independency was considered as some additional security for their fidelity. And the zeal, with which persons of the highest rank among us would then press forward to this work, would bring us into a necessity of directing into some other channel that provision which the wise charity of some public benefactors, the living and the dead, has made for the support of poor students for the ministry: a charity which, in the low ebb to which religion is fallen amongst us, may almost, under God, be called the hope of our churches, even for the very next generation. Especially would the richest and greatest esteem it their honour and their happiness, did they consider what I am in the last place to mention to you, my dear brother, viz.

6. The glorious expectation and hope, which closes the whole prospect.

What if every other hope, but that of religious improvement, were in a moment to vanish? What if nothing should remain, between this and the grave, but the view of labours, of reproaches, of tribulations, of persecutions? What if you were to conflict, through the whole of your course, with the malice of enemies, the coldness and ingratitude of friends, the incorrigible obstinacy of sinners, the perverseness and imperfections of those whom, if any are such, we must hope to be Christians? Here is enough to balance all. Death is approaching: death, that stripped Aaron of his garments and of his burthens together, and ended all his painful pilgrimage. *Be faithful unto death, says our divine Master, and I will give thee a crown of life.*⁴⁶ Oh think every day of the ecstasy with which you shall receive that crown, and of the high everlasting exultation with which you shall wear it. Think of the joy with which, after a life of persevering fidelity to him, your separate spirit shall ascend into his presence, ere yet this body, the instrument of his service, shall be laid

⁴⁶ Revelation 2: 10

in the grave. Think of the congratulations, with which your venerable predecessors, your eminently pious parents, and those of your flock who have fled upwards before you, will then meet you, and hail your arrival. And think how Jesus will, by one smile and embrace, overpay all the labours and sufferings of a long protracted life. Think of the complacency and delight, with which you will look down on the field which you have cultivated, and on the growing harvest you have left behind; while perhaps some of the blessed fruits of your labours may be running on from age to age, so as to be the means of propagating Christianity to the last rounds of time. And O think, above all, of the *Great day of the Lord, when the chief Shepherd shall appear*, that he may confer on *you*, and on all those who have faithfully discharged their ministry, *a crown of glory that fadeth not away*.⁴⁷ Then, when every Christian of the lowest station and character shall receive his proper share of honour and reward, what may you expect, if you faithfully improve your ten talents, when those of your people whom you have converted or edified, appear with you as your *Joy and your crown in the presence of the Lord*,⁴⁸ and are honoured with the public applause and remunerations of the eternal and universal Judge in the face of the whole assembled world? All the pageantry of human greatness passes away like a dream; *The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood*.⁴⁹ but human souls are durable and immortal; and they that have turned many of them to righteousness, shall have, in each, an everlasting ornament, and, decked with a new lustre from each, *Shall shine as the stars for ever and ever*.⁵⁰

May that God whom we serve, through the riches of his grace, give us all a portion in the triumph of that day! And

⁴⁷ 1 Peter 5: 4

⁴⁸ 1 Thessalonians 2: 19

⁴⁹ Acts 2: 20

⁵⁰ Daniel 12: 3

may he add to all the joy, which the most unworthy of his servants is humbly bold to expect in it, that of seeing you, my dear brother, giving up an account of a faithful and happily successful ministry! To encourage and assist you in the discharge of which, may these plain hints conduce, through the blessing of him, who knows how, from the least and most inconsiderable seeds, to call up a rich and plentiful harvest! Amen.

AN APPENDIX,

Relating to the usual methods of Ordination among
the Protestant Dissenters.

As in the beginning of the Charge I have touched upon the decent solemnities attending the methods of Ordination generally used among the Protestant Dissenters, it may not be improper to give a brief account of them; especially as I have been earnestly desired to do it by a pious and learned clergyman of the established church; who apprehends it may obviate some mistakes, and promote that mutual candour among Christians of different denominations, which both of us concur to wish, and labour to promote. There is indeed a little variety in the usages of different places; but that which I have generally seen, does, I believe, prevail in most of our churches, with the exception, and sometimes no more than the transposition, of a few circumstances.

It very rarely happens, that a minister among us is admitted to the pastoral office, till he hath spent some years as a kind of candidate for it; and, so far as I can recollect, more undertake it after, than before, their twenty-sixth year is completed. But as our theological students generally employ either four or five years in preparatory studies, after they have quitted the grammar-schools, so they are examined by

three or four elder ministers before they begin to preach.⁵¹ A strict inquiry is made into their character, and into their furniture; both with respect to the learned languages, especially the sacred, and also as to the various parts of natural and moral philosophy; but above all, into their acquaintance with divinity; and some specimen of their abilities for prayer and preaching is generally expected.

An unordained minister is seldom chosen to the pastoral office in any of our churches, for in the members of each of these societies the whole right of election lies, till he has resided among them some months, or perhaps some years; preaching stately to them, and performing most other ministerial offices, excepting the administration of the sacraments.

When the society, which generally proceeds with entire unanimity in this great affair, has received what it judges competent satisfaction, the several members of it join in giving him a solemn and express call to take upon him the pastoral inspection over them: and if he be disposed to accept it, he generally signifies that intention to neighbouring pastors; whose concurrence he desires in solemnly setting him apart to that office.

Previous to the assembly for this sacred purpose, his credentials and testimonials are produced, if it be required by any who are to be concerned; and satisfaction as to his principles is also given to those who are to carry on the public work, generally by his communicating to them the confession of his faith which he has drawn up; in which it is expected, that the great doctrines of Christianity should be touched upon in a proper order, and his persuasion of them plainly and seriously expressed, in such words as he judges most convenient. And we generally think this a proper and happy medium, between the indolence of acquiescing in a

⁵¹ See the dedication to my Sermon on *The Evil and Danger of neglecting Men's Souls*, &c.

general declaration of believing the Christian religion, without declaring what it is apprehended to be, and the severity of demanding a subscription to any set of articles, where if an honest man, who believes all the rest, scruples any one article, phrase, or word, he is as effectually excluded, as if he rejected the whole.

The pastors, who are to bear their part in the public work, having been thus in their consciences satisfied, that the person offering himself to ordination is duly qualified for the Christian ministry, and regularly called to the full exercise of it; they proceed, at the appointed time and place, to consecrate him to it, and to recommend him to the grace and blessing of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Head of the church, by fasting and prayer, generally accompanied with the imposition of hands; and the public work of the day is usually, so far as I have been witness, carried on in the following order, or something very near it.

It commonly opens with a short prayer, and the reading some select portions of Scripture which seem most proper to the occasion; then a prayer is offered of greater length and compass than the former, in which most of our common concerns as Christians are included; which is sometimes, though less frequently, succeeded by another of the same kind. Then follows a sermon, on some suitable subject, such as the institution, importance, difficulty, and excellency of the ministerial work, the character and conduct of the first ministers of the gospel, or the like.

After this introduction of a more general nature, another minister, usually one of the eldest present, who is a kind of moderator for the day, gives the assembly a more particular account of the occasion of its being convened. The call of the church to the candidate is then recognized, either in word, or writing, or by lifting up the hand; and his acceptance is also declared. He is then desired, for the satisfaction and edification of the assembly, to pronounce the confession of faith; which his brethren have already heard and approved; and pertinent questions are put to

him, relating to the views and purposes with which he undertakes the solemn charge, that he may be brought under the most awful engagements to a suitable behaviour in it; and an express renunciation of the errors and superstitions of the Romish church generally makes a part of these answers, as well as a declaration of his resolution, by divine grace, never to forsake the ministry, whatever inconveniences and sufferings it may draw after it.

This being despatched, the presiding minister comes down from the pulpit, and prays over the person to be set apart. There is no particular form of prayer on this occasion, or on any other among us; but I have observed, that the person who officiates is generally led in such a circumstance, to adore the divine wisdom and grace, in the constitution and revelation of the gospel, in the appointment of an evangelical ministry, and in supporting the succession of it throughout all ages of the Christian church, as well as in vindicating it from popish corruption and bondage. Some notice is often taken of what may have seemed most remarkable in Providence, with regard to the particular circumstances of the society then to be settled, and the person to be set apart to the ministerial office in it; who is then solemnly offered up to the service of God, and recommended to his blessing, in all the several parts of his work, which are distinctly enumerated. And this prayer seldom concludes without fervent intercession with God, for the Christian church in general, and all its faithful ministers of every denomination: and as those rising up to succeed in the work are often mentioned here, so I have had the pleasure frequently to hear the universities of our island, as well as more private seminaries of learned and pious education, affectionately recommended to the divine protection and favour on such occasions, with all the genuine appearances of a truly Christian and catholic spirit. When that part of this prayer begins, which immediately relates to the person then to be consecrated to the service of the sanctuary, it is usual for the speaker to lay his hand on his head; and the other pastors conveniently within reach, frequently to the number of six, eight, or ten, lay on their

hands also, at the same time: by which we do not pretend to convey any spiritual gifts, but only use it as a solemn, and expedient, though not absolutely necessary, designation of the person then to be set apart.

When this prayer is over, which often engages a very profound attention, and seems to make a very deep impression both on ministers and people, the Charge is given to the newly ordained pastor, who generally receives it standing as much as may be in the sight of the whole assembly: and an exhortation to the people is sometimes joined with the charge, or sometimes follows it as a distinct service, unless, which is frequently the case, it is superseded by the sermon, or some other previous address. Another prayer follows; and singing having been intermingled, so as properly to diversify a service necessarily so long, the whole is concluded with a solemn benediction.

I know no method of proceeding on such occasions, more rational, edifying, and Scriptural than this; and I hope, few who believe any thing of Christianity, can be so ignorant or abandoned, as to make light of such solemnities. But however any of our fellow-servants may judge, I have a calm, steady, and joyful assurance, that transactions like these are registered in heaven with approbation, and receive the sanction and blessing of *the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls*.

Northampton, September 18, 1745.

POSTSCRIPT

As the want of psalms or hymns, peculiarly suitable to these occasions, has often been regretted on our Ordination days, when we have generally been confined to the 132nd or 133rd Psalms, I was desired by several of my brethren to publish that which followed this Charge and I accordingly do it without any further apology. The reader will easily

perceive, It is a kind of devout paraphrase on Eph. iv. 8, et seq. And it is one of some hundreds lying by me, on a variety of Scripture subjects.

A HYMN

I.

FATHER of mercies, in thine house,
Shine on our homage and our vows!
While with a grateful heart we share
These pledges of our Saviour's care.

II.

Blest Saviour! when to heaven he rose
In splendid triumph o'er his foes,
What royal gifts he scatter'd down;
How large, how permanent the boon!

III.

Hence sprung th' apostle's honoured name,
Sacred, beyond heroic fame:
Hence dictates the prophetic sage;
And hence the evangelic page.

IV.

In lowlier forms, to bless our eyes,
Pastors from hence and teachers rise;
Who, though with feebler rays they shine,
Still gild a long-extended line.

V.

From Christ their varied gifts derive,
And fed by Christ their graces live;
While guarded by his potent hand,

Midst all the rage of hell they stand.

VI.

So shall the bright succession run
Through the last courses of the sun;
While unborn churches by their care
Shall rise and flourish, fresh and fair.

VII.

Jesus our Lord their hearts shall know,
The spring whence all these blessings flow;
Pastors and people shout his praise
Through the long round of endless days!

Among other books, Dr Clifford is the author of *THE GOOD DOCTOR - Philip Doddridge of Northampton: A Tercentenary Tribute* (Norwich: Charenton Reformed Publishing, 2002). ISBN 0-9526716-3-8