

TWO SERMONS,
PREACHED AT SANDWICH.

THE FIRST,
FEBRUARY 16, 1813, ON A
DAY OF FASTING,
APPOINTED BY THE FIRST CHURCH IN THAT TOWN.

THE SECOND,
FEB. 17, 1813, AT THE
INSTALLATION
OF REV. JONATHAN BURR, A. M.
Pastor of the First Church in Sandwich,

TO THE CARE OF THE CALVINISTIC CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY
LATELY ASSOCIATED WITH THAT CHURCH.

BY OLIVER COBB, A. M.
Pastor of the First Church in Rochester.

ALSO,
THE CHARGE,
BY REV. MR. EVERITT OF WAREHAM.
AND THE
RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP,
BY THE REV. MR. LINCOLN OF FALMOUTH.

Published by request of said Church and Society, and the profits to be appropriated to their benefit.

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FOR the information of those who are not acquainted with the circumstances which occasioned the ensuing discourses, the following extracts are here inserted, from a Circular, addressed by the first Church in Sandwich to the friends of Zion, soliciting aid in the erection of a new Meeting House.

“On the 18th of July, 1811, the Parish [in Sandwich] passed a vote, by a small majority, to close the meeting-house against our pastor, Rev. Mr. Burr, and to engage another preacher to supply his place; whereby the church, consisting of between two and three hundred members, has been reduced to the painful alternative, of either hearing a preacher, in whose appointment they have no voice, and of whose doctrines they cannot approve, or, meeting for worship in a dwelling house, in which many cannot hear, and all are poorly accommodated. For more than nineteen months we have preferred the latter alternative—have experienced great inconvenience and incurred considerable expense—have made every exertion, which a sense of duty dictated, to recover our former right in the meeting-house, parsonage, &c.—and are at length constrained to give up all hope of success while we remain united with the parish, unless we relinquish a right, in our view, infinitely more valuable, that of choosing our own minister. A new society has lately been formed and associated with the church, by the name of the *Calvinistic Congregational Society in Sandwich*, over which, by their unanimous desire, our Pastor was installed on the 17th inst.

“Though our loss in point of property, considering our circumstances, is very great, yet we trust we are enabled, in some measure, to take joyfully the spoiling of our goods, for conscience' sake. The parsonage and parish property, exclusive of the meeting-house, was worth from 245 to 330 dollars a year. About half the pews in the meeting-house were owned by the church and society now associated with it, amounting to upwards of 2,500 dollars.”

FAST SERMON.

2 CHRONICLES XXV. 9.

“ But what shall we do for the hundred talents ? ”

THE enmity, which was put between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, continues. God has repeatedly notified his people of it, and cautioned them against any alliances, or community of interests with the world, which may prove a snare to their souls, or prevent a distinction between those, who serve the Lord, and those, who do not. This distinction was early made, between believing Abel and unbelieving Cain : God accepting the person and sacrifice of the former ; and rejecting the person and sacrifice of the latter.

In the family of pious Seth, God had a chosen seed, among whom his worship was attended.

The descendants of Cain, in this respect, were very different. They paid no regard to God and religion ; their minds were engrossed in pursuing the curious arts of the world, in accumulating riches, and in making a splendid figure.

By these gaudy trifles, the descendants of believing Seth were ensnared. They courted alliances with that ungodly race, intermarried with them, &c. Gen. vi. 2. *The sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair ; and they took them wives of all which they chose.*

This unnatural connexion was of no spiritual advantage to either party. The children, who were the fruits of their intermarriages, were many of them mighty men, men of renown, giants in worldly wisdom and policy ; but the wickedness of man, also became great in the earth, and the general deluge soon succeeded.

The evils resulting from any intimate connexions between the friends of God and his enemies, are too numerous to particularize. Such connexions have uniformly tended to increase wickedness and draw down the judgments of Heaven. Hence, Jehovah prohibited Israel, under severe penalties, from forming any entangling alliances with the heathen.

Balaam, though he was not suffered to curse Israel, knew and taught Balak, how the curse of God might be brought upon them. This project was carried into execution by the Moabites, when they enticed the children of Israel to their scenes of merriment and idolatrous feasts. For thus dishonouring God by their licentiousness, great wrath was upon the people.

After the ten tribes revolted from the house of David, Jeroboam, under the specious pretext of accommodating the people, introduced idolatry. He set up two calves, the one in Bethel, the other in Dan, and proclaimed, *These be thy gods, O Israel.*

From this time, the ten tribes were awfully corrupt. Judah and Benjamin, though partially infected with idolatry, yet generally maintained the worship of God in some degree of purity, till Jehoshaphat joined affinity with wicked Ahab. This proved a snare to Judah. The idols of Israel were in this way introduced, and Jehoshaphat, though a pious prince, was not able to prevent the direful effects of this entangling alliance. These evils increased after his death; so that a genuine daughter of idolatrous Jezabel, reigned six years over Judah.

In the chapter containing our text, we have an account that Amaziah king of Judah, collected his forces, to war with the Edomites. He also hired a hundred thousand men of Israel, to whom he advanced a hundred talents of silver. *But there came a man of God to him, saying, O king, let not the army of Israel go with thee, for the Lord is not with Israel. But if thou wilt go, do it; God shall make thee fall before the enemy; for God hath power to help and to cast down. And Amaziah said to the man of God, but what shall we do for the hundred talents, which I have given to the army of Israel?*

Amaziah appears to have been convinced that this message was from God; and he was afraid to disobey. Still, however, his mind was deeply impressed with the advanced pay of the Israelites. He deemed it an object of importance, in some way or other, to save the hundred talents, if possible.

The disciples of Christ, it is believed, are many times in a state of embarrassment, similar to that of Amaziah, arising from their improper connexion with the world. It is manifest, that many calculations in religion are made from maxims of worldly wisdom, prudence and interest. The passage before us, in this point of view, contains important instruction.

Had Amaziah consulted the sacred oracles, or asked counsel of God, prior to his engagement with the Israelites, he might have saved his hundred talents.

So the disciples of Jesus, if they were attentive to his instructions, would have no community of interest, in religious matters, with his enemies. The church is a body separate from the world, and should transact its own affairs in a separate capacity.

But our subject leads us to that state of christians, which has arisen from want of such precautionary measures. And what is to be done? Christ has directed those, who would be his disciples, to count the cost. Luke xiv. 28. *For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?* Jesus has shown us, that in order to be his disciples, our hearts must set lightly by the world; that we must renounce its gaudy vanities, deny ourselves, and take up the cross. These things are trying to those, who are making their religious calculations in dollars and cents; who are afraid of the frowns, and are living on the smiles of the world. But, the business of the christian is to trust in the Lord and do good; and not be afraid of doing too much for God.

It is presumed, that, in general, there is a rational conviction of truth and duty; while, at the same time, attachment to the world prompts the inquiry, *What shall we do for the hundred talents?*

Nor, is this disposition confined to hypocrites and formalists; the infection spreads and manifests itself, in some degree, among true christians. Rather than relinquish the favour of the world, *christians* are almost persuaded, at the expense of conformity, and even *submission* to the world, to cement their unhallowed connexion with it. Christians are in danger: with christians, therefore, we shall begin. And as I wish to be tried and proved myself, I shall set ministers of the gospel at the head of the list.

1. Ministers of Christ are in danger of deviating from the path of duty, through an improper attachment to the world. It is well known to the true servant of Christ, that a rigid adherence to the requirements of his Master, is not the road to popularity, wealth or preferment. He is fully sensible, that the rich, great and noble are not generally pleased with the doctrines of the cross. He moreover knows, that, *He, who provideth not for his own, especially those of his own house, hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.* And what is necessary, but to compromise matters with the world? This may be done, by keeping back part of God's truth, and putting a gloss on part. Here is a temptation to the mental inquiry, at least, *What shall I do?*

Suppose by earnestly contending for the faith, which was once delivered to the saints, a minister loses friends and gets enemies. Friendship is truly desirable. To have men become our enemies, and reproach and revile us, in itself considered, is painful. In such circumstances, trying indeed to the christian minister, the inquiry is naturally suggested, *What shall I do to secure peace and friendship, which I value more than the hundred talents?*

Suppose further, the servant of Christ, by teaching the things which become sound doctrine, in a plain distinguishing manner, is deprived of his living, the stipulated support of his family. Will it not be extremely natural, humanly speaking, for him to look about him and inquire, *What shall we do for the hundred talents?* This temptation is great, and, it is to be feared, is *sometimes* too powerful; *always* would be, if ministers calculated by the world's arithmetic. And if, by grace, ministers are kept from actually deserting the standard of their Lord, and setting up that of his enemies, still the hundred talents may have amazing weight on the mind. Against this worldly, selfish, satanic influence, the ministers of Jesus should watch and pray, and pray and watch.

2. Private christians, allow me to direct your attention to this subject. Are you not led, at times, to make the inquiry in the sense of the text, *What shall we do for the hundred talents?* The scriptures direct you respecting the ground which you should take, if you would be followers of Christ. *Be not conformed to this world. Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world.* 2 Cor. vi. 14—17. *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? &c*

Wherefore, come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.

These passages do not imply, that christians must have no community of interest with the world. They do not prohibit their endeavours, so far as consistent with duty to God, to maintain a neighbourly, kind and friendly intercourse with the world. Hence the apostle exhorts, *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Do good to all men, as you have opportunity.* The prohibition of conformity to the world, does not relate to the common courtesies of life, and connexion with the world in civil and secular matters; but *solely* to the things of religion. In these there is no union of sentiment, feeling nor interest between the believer and unbeliever. In every thing, therefore, which directly or indirectly affects the state of religion, God requires his people to be separate from the world.

Christ, the great captain of our salvation, under his sorest temptations, yielded not a single point to his enemies; and therefore triumphed over them. He has set us an example, that we should follow his steps. The rules of his kingdom, touching the point under consideration, are plain.

True, it may be replied, the rules are plain; but are there no exceptions? May not a rigid adherence to these rules be dispensed with, under peculiar circumstances? May we not, to secure peace and harmony in society, give up some points, conform a little to the views and feelings of the world?

And further, *What shall we do for the hundred talents?* If we are so rigid in religion; the world will retaliate, as it respects worldly things. Our interest will suffer; we shall be deprived of posts of honour and profit; we shall not be in so advantageous circumstances to do good, as we should be, if we were less tenacious of our religious sentiments and privileges.

Besides these things, the world assists us in supporting religious institutions; and, unless we conform in some measure to its views and feelings, this assistance will be withholden. And, *What shall we do for the hundred talents?*

These and many other things tend not only to unmask hypocrites and formal professors, but are also extremely trying to true christians. And God intends that his people shall be tried; and that they shall through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of heaven. Our Lord was tempted, he was told by the great deceiver, that all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them should be his, if he would fall down and worship him. Jesus rejected the offer with disdain, and spurned the tempter from him.

If our obligations of strict obedience to Christ might ever be dispensed with in any instance, they surely might when life is in danger. But, even in this case, it is not admissible; and the followers of Christ must take up their cross.

Let those who profess to be christians, be ashamed to inquire, *What shall we do for the hundred talents?* when Jesus does not allow them to inquire, *What shall we do to save our lives?* Obedience to Christ should supersede every other consideration. Hence, Paul, having spoken of bonds and afflictions, observes, Acts 20, 24, *But*

none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, &c.

3. We would observe that *the hundred talents*, the friendship, favour and interest of the world, are a dead weight with hypocrites, formalists and all impenitent sinners. Some indeed manifest little concern about the business; they are determined to secure the hundred talents, without regard to what God requires, or what he forbids. Persons of this description, where the light of the gospel has been diffused, it is believed, are not numerous.

Far the greater part of those, who live without God in the world, have seasons of conviction—have divine truth impressed on their minds with awful weight and solemnity—have seasons of trembling like Felix. But the world with its amusements, pleasures, riches and honours, bid serious impressions go their way. The doctrines and duties of christianity are too self-denying for the carnal mind.

And yet, the awakened sinner is reluctant at giving up all thoughts of religion and the well being of his soul. But still, *the hundred talents* bear down every thing, in favour of satan's kingdom.

Carnal reasons, like the following, occupy different minds, to justify the neglect of the one thing needful. I shall lose my gay companions and scenes of merriment—I shall be despised and ridiculed, as other christians are—I shall have enemies—I shall be injured in my property, perhaps, reduced to infamy and want. I am almost persuaded, that christianity is the way to heaven; but, What shall I do respecting the expenses of the journey?

In this way men lose their souls. They either turn aside and entirely follow their worldly schemes; or attempt to effect a compromise between God and mammon. They try to believe, that allowances will be made in certain cases—that, as God is merciful, he will not mark small deviations from the path of rectitude—that Christ did not come into the world to abridge happiness; and finally, that under their peculiar circumstances, they may hope for mercy without being so precise, so strict in religion: which is, in effect, saying, that they can be saved without denying themselves, taking up the cross, and forsaking all for Christ.

If this kind of religion would answer, the world would be full of religion. If all our idols might be retained, if we would be so charitable towards one another, as to allow, that doctrinal sentiments are of no great importance, and that persons may go to heaven, whether they are regenerated or not, provided their external conduct be civil and moral: if we could be agreed in these things, we might all walk together, each in the name of his god. Satan, no doubt, would be well pleased with such a coalition; but how would it answer at the bar of Christ? Has he ever thus degraded his religion? No: there is not a single passage in the Book of God, which tolerates such a motley mixture.

God has laid the foundation for the pardon and happiness of sinners. He has proposed the terms, on which he will accept them; these terms are reasonable, equitable, merciful. And he will not recede from them. The hundred talents must be given up. James iv. 4, *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*

This is one reason, why pure religion is so unpopular ; it will not yield to the carnal feelings and erroneous views of natural men. It will not allow them to secure *the hundred talents*. And another reason of its unpopularity is, that it imputes the salvation of sinners, entirely, to distinguishing grace. In the first respect, it points out the reasonable duty of man ; in the last respect, it lays his pride and self-importance in the dust. Hence, however pleasing *men's* schemes may be, *God's* scheme is always displeasing, till persons are born of the Spirit, and become new creatures. Till this change takes place, *the hundred talents* will keep the ascendancy in the mind, bearing men down to perdition.

I would entreat you to think of one solemn query of our Lord, *What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul ? or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?* And,

I would observe that the hundred talents are safe, if you will take God's security for them.

To Amaziah's inquiry, *the man of God answered, The Lord is able to give thee much more than this.*

So I am authorized to assure you, that the Lord is able to refund all, which you relinquish in obedience to him. Do you not know, that God has all property in his hand ? That all the treasures of earth and heaven are his, in the most absolute sense ? Do you not know, that riches and honours are at his disposal ? Do you not know that the hearts of all are in his hand—that he can bind the hands of your enemies, so that they cannot injure you ; or change their hearts, so that they will become your cordial friends ?

Perhaps, it will be answered ; yes, we know that God is *able* to do all these things ; but *will* he do them ? Yes, I reply, he will do them. We have his obligation for it in the Sacred Volume. Matt. vi. 33 *But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness ; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

And God will repay you in kind too, in blessings of this world for all which you relinquish in support of his cause. The case of Solomon is in point. He did not give himself anxiety about the hundred talents ; but asked for *wisdom*. God granted his request ; and because he made this judicious choice, God gave him that which he had *not* asked, riches and honour superior to any of the kings. And the very reason assigned for it, is, because he had not chosen these things, but chosen wisdom.

The prophet Haggai, reproving the neglect of the people to build the Lord's house, assures them that the Lord had sent judgments, blasting and mildew, and cut short their increase, on account of their covetousness. And by the same prophet God assumes his right to their property. Hag. ii. 8, 9. *The silver is mine, and the gold is mine. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts ; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts.* Our Lord declared, Luke xviii. 29, 30. *Verily I say unto you, There is no man, that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.* Will this obligation answer ?

God calls upon people to make sacrifices in his cause, to try them and prove them. It is not because he needs their property, nor because he intends they shall eventually lose any thing in his service. He can give them much more than all which they relinquish for the advancement of religion; yea, an hundred fold more, even in this life.

A man never had his days shortened, by being willing to lay down his life for Christ's sake. *There is an appointed time to man upon the earth.* And Christ hath assured us, *He that will save his life shall lose it; but he that will lose his life for my sake, shall find it.*

Nothing is wanting to secure the blessings of time and eternity, but faith which worketh by love. This will secure *the hundred talents* and much more. But if any will court the favour of men, and compromise matters with the world, they will lose their souls, and, probably, *the hundred talents* besides.

It becomes us, then, to labour and suffer reproach; to make every temporal sacrifice, and endure every hardship, rather than make a single attempt to accommodate the doctrines of the cross, and the duties of religion to the carnal mind. It becomes us to stand fast; earnestly contend for the faith; trust in the Lord, and do good.

INFERENCES.

1. In the light of this subject, we may see at what a low rate men are bartering away their souls! The objects of time and sense engross their affections, and the pearl of great price is neglected. One has purchased a farm, another a yoke of oxen, another has married a wife; therefore, when Christ calls, *They all with one consent begin to make excuse.* Pause a moment—Reflect on the shortness of life; your inability to secure one of its comforts; the solemn account which you must hereafter give; and say, whether you are not trifling away eternal things!

2. Christians should be roused and animated by this subject. Realize, that God will take care of whatever you relinquish for the cause of truth and righteousness, and in his own good time and way will restore it. Be ashamed ever to inquire, even in your hearts, *What shall we do for the hundred talents?* The ten thousand talents spent in satan's service, are not spent with reluctance. The man of pleasure does not count the cost of his sensual gratification; the drunkard does not count the cost of his excesses; young people do not count the cost of their vain, sinful amusements. In these, and a great variety of ways, the wicked make great sacrifices without calculating.

But, if such costly sacrifices are offered to the god of this world, offered with pleasure; awake, O christian, and zealously engage in the cause of the glorious Redeemer. The liberal man deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand.

When we reflect on our standing in the vineyard of God ; that the Sun of righteousness has shined, and the dews of grace descended on us ; and yet, how little fruit we have brought forth ; we must feel the propriety of humiliation, fasting and prayer : for which solemn purpose, the church in this place have set apart this day. May we, with united hearts, keep the day. May we, like God's people of old, *Seek a right way for ourselves and our little ones.* And may the prayers, offered up for the church at large, and the afflicted branch of it in this place, ascend like incense before God.*

* This sermon was delivered in the afternoon, the former part of the day having been spent in prayers and short exhortations, by other ministers present.

INSTALLATION SERMON.

NEHEMIAH VI. 3.

“ I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you ?”

THE great work, to which this passage refers, was the rebuilding of Jerusalem, after the seventy years captivity at Babylon. Encouraged by the decree of Cyrus, and stirred up by the Spirit of God, Zerubbabel and others returned to the holy land, and began with spirit their pious undertaking. But meeting with many discouragements, their zeal abated, their labours relaxed, and they came to the conclusion, that the time was not come, the set time, that the Lord's house should be built. At length, aroused from their lethargy, and animated by the prophets of God, Haggai and Zechariah, they completed the Temple; but the walls and gates of the city were in ruins, till Nehemiah obtained permission and encouragement from the king of Persia, to go to Jerusalem and superintend the building.

This gave a favourable turn to the affairs of the Jews; and under the good hand of God the great work was completed.

It will be perceived, by attending to the scriptures, that violent opposition was made to this undertaking, from its commencement to its completion. A host of opposers rose up against the people of God, and the great work which he had directed to be done. All the arts, and threats, and force, which satan and his emissaries could exercise, were exerted to weaken the hands of the builders and discourage their hearts.

At length, Sanballat and others, who were rulers in Samaria under the Persian monarch, with the design to practise mischief against Nehemiah, and to put a period to the building, sent for him to meet them at a certain place. Aware of their wicked purpose, disguised under the mask of friendship, Nehemiah sent the reply which we have chosen for the theme of this discourse. *I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you ?*

The work in which christians, and especially christian ministers, are engaged, is a work of magnitude. To this great work we shall have special reference in the present discourse; and to this, we shall accommodate the passage before us in its connexion.

Jerusalem may represent the church of Christ : the captivity of the Jews at Babylon—the captivity of men in a natural state to the god of this world : the proclamation of liberty to the captives, by Cyrus—the proclamation of liberty to satan's slaves, by Jesus Christ : the Jews, who were stirred up to return and build Jerusalem—those, who are inclined by the Spirit to turn to God and labour on the New Jerusalem : those Jews who staid behind at Babylon—those who slight the messages of grace, and will serve their old master : opposers of the work—all in an impenitent state, from the open infidel to the professed disciple who betrays his Lord with a kiss : Nehemiah—the faithful servant of Christ, whose heart is fixed on this great work, who trusts in the Lord, and who will not be interrupted by all the threats and force of open enemies ; the arts and intrigues of secret enemies ; the counsel and warning of pretended friends.

It will be our first object to exhibit the characters of some of the numerous enemies of this great work.

And, secondly, to point out the duty of those who wish well to spiritual Jerusalem, and especially of her watchmen.

I. We are to exhibit the characters of some of the numerous enemies to the building of spiritual Jerusalem.

1. We may notice deists and atheists. These openly make war with God and the Lamb ; and are determined that not one stone shall be laid upon another on the walls of the spiritual city, if they can prevent it. These direct their aim at the very foundation, the chief corner stone.

This class is strikingly figured to us by the Arabians, the Ammonites and the Ashdodites, who, when they found that the building of Jerusalem was progressing, were very wroth, and conspired all of them together to come and fight against Jerusalem and hinder it. Nehemiah iv. 8. Little need be said to guard christians against this class of enemies. Those, who deny the being of God, or the inspiration of the scriptures, whatever their mode of attack may be, clearly manifest under whose banners they fight.

2. Another class of opposers to this great work, are those who believe part of the Bible, and deny part ; or who profess to believe the whole, yet deny some of the doctrines and duties most clearly revealed. These, in many respects, are worse than open professed infidels. The Samaritans were of this cast. Their religion was a motley mixture of heathen idolatry and Judaism. Their worship was mere mockery. Hence our Lord told the woman of Samaria, *Ye worship ye know not what*. From the account given of these Samaritans, both by Ezra and Nehemiah, it is manifest that they were most virulent opposers of the building of Jerusalem.

So we ever find those, who bring the word of God to the standard of their own carnal reason and feelings, the most bitter enemies of vital christianity. They hate the doctrines of grace, and more especially, when the holy Spirit makes these doctrines a means of reviving religion. The scribes and pharisees of old, when they had modelled the word of God by their traditions, were zealous supporters of it ; because, as Christ declared, they had made void the law of God by their traditions. They had brought it down to their carnal minds ; and, in perfect consistency with their zeal for this medley of religion, they hated the blessed Redeemer and the truth of God.

Such characters, in every age, have manifested the most decided hostility to gospel preaching, and those influences of the Holy Ghost, which make it effectual to salvation.

Some of the various methods, which this class of opposers adopt, to hinder this great work, will further illustrate their character.

(1.) To corrupt the truth and ensnare christians, one method is, to propose a union. This was tried by the Samaritans. *Ezra iv. 2. Then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you : for we seek your God as ye do : and we do sacrifice unto him, since the days of Esar-haddon, king of Assur, which brought us up hither.* This deep-laid stratagem is often tried, by mock-christians, to introduce heresy, divide the builders, and prevent the work. Pharisees and Herodians attempted, in this way, to ensnare the Lord Jesus. *Matt. xxii. 16. We know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man ; for thou regardest not the person of men.* In this insidious way, corrupt doctrines, subversive of the scheme of grace, were introduced among the Galatians ; as is evident, from Paul's epistle to them. This is a device, which has often been successfully tried, to weaken the hands of the spiritual builders, and retard this great work.

Satan cares not how much false religion there is ; nor, if it be but *false*, how near it approaches to the *true*. His ends are answered, however decent, civil and moral the external deportment may be ; provided, the doctrines of grace are corrupted, and the sinner's heart not changed.

(2.) Another artifice is, to raise evil reports against this great work and the workmen. The Samaritans tried this scheme, to prevent the rebuilding of Jerusalem. They represented it, as a rebellious city—hired counsellors against the people to frustrate their purpose—wrote to the king of Persia, that the Jews strengthened themselves—that, if allowed to build the city, they would cast off the yoke—would not pay tribute—would dishonour the king, &c. See *Ezra iv. 4—16.*

So, respecting the great spiritual work of grace, how many evil reports are spread ! When God, by the effusions of his Spirit, accompanies the plain, distinguishing doctrines of the gospel, to the awakening, conviction and conversion of sinners ; how are the advocates of this work stigmatized ? They are represented, as destroying the peace of society—eradicating moral obligation—opening the flood-gates of iniquity—turning the world upside down—dishonouring the King of heaven, &c. &c.

These and the like evil reports are circulated, by Samaritan christians, against those, who would have spiritual Jerusalem built, on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. And at the same time, that they are sapping the very foundation of the spiritual city, they will profess great concern for the honour of God ; great anxiety, lest he should receive detriment ; lest his name and his cause should be reproached.

(3.) Those, who bring the word of God to the standard of their carnal mind, often despise and ridicule this great work, and scoff at those, who are engaged in it. The Samaritans took this ground, to prevent the rebuilding of Jerusalem. *Nehemiah ii. 19, They laughed us to scorn and despised us, and said, What is this thing.*

which ye do ? Will ye rebel against the king ? Again, Nehemiah iv. 2, 3, *What do these feeble Jews ? Will they fortify themselves ? Will they sacrifice ? Will they make an end in a day ? Will they remove the stones out of the heaps of rubbish ?—Even that, which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.* In like manner, is the great work, which God is carrying on, by the agency of his Spirit, and by means of gospel preaching, ridiculed, and his servants despised. Even when Jesus was laying the foundation of this building, in his precious blood, there were scoffers surrounding the cross, and insulting the dying Redeemer. There were mockers on the day of Pentecost, when the Lord blessed the pungent preaching of Peter, to the conversion of multitudes. This spirit continues, and manifests itself, whenever there is a reformation. This great work is ridiculed, as a temporary business ; the effect of error and fanaticism soon to terminate ; and its advocates, as enthusiasts and babblers. Thus, when the work of the Lord prospers, its enemies would check its progress, and discourage its friends, with a *sneer*, which but illy conceals their indignation and extreme anxiety.

(4.) If other plans do not succeed, the class of opposers, which we are contemplating, will take more decisive steps against the work. Herein, they resemble the Samaritans. When Sanballat and others found, that the walls of Jerusalem were nearly completed, they were very wroth, and conspired all of them together, to hinder it by force. They sent out their threats, and especially, against Nehemiah, that they would come down, in the night, and slay him.

3. Another class of opposers, to the spirit and power of religion, are mere formal professors. These are dangerous enemies. As they are among the disciples, they have a name to live ; but no heart to put a helping hand to this great work. We may distinguish these into two classes. Those who are opposed to the leading doctrines of the gospel ; and those who are immoral in their conduct. As it respects the former, they will listen to those without, who speak against the truth, and join with them.

There were many of the Jews, who returned from Babylon, whose hearts were not in favour of building Jerusalem. They listened to the stories of the Samaritans, and united with them, in opposing the great work which their brethren had undertaken, by God's direction and influence. It is a great acquisition, to the strength of the world, to have some of the professed disciples of Jesus, on their side—it is perplexing, to the weak in faith—it is discouraging, to all the friends of Zion. Persons, of this description, will have a most solemn account to give, at the bar of God, for taking his covenant into their mouths, while their hearts were far from him.

The second class of enemies, under this head, are immoral professors. The great Head of the church requires not only soundness in the faith, but purity of heart and life. The church is, as a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid. The enemies of religion are vigilant, to find something to confirm the evil reports which they have circulated against christians. They want to find some scandalous immoralities, in individual members, by which, they may characterize the whole body. To the joy of their souls, and the grief of those, who love the Lord, they sometimes do find such persons. These, whatever their *sentiments* may be, and whatever their *hopes* may be,

have not the marks of God's children ; but, must be ranked with opposers of this great work. There were many, among the Jews, whose gross immoralities were a grief to the pious ; these were sharply reprov'd by Nehemiah, and, on their account, solemn seasons of prayer were observed.

4. There were seasons when the Jews, who returned from captivity to rebuild Jerusalem, were disheartened. Though they were desirous to have the city and temple built, they had lost that zeal and energy, which were necessary to carry on the work.

This brings to view, the most formidable enemies of the christian cause—the enemies within. “ *The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other.*” When the hearts of christians are discouraged, so that they relinquish this great work, the flesh has gained the ascendancy. Spiritual Jerusalem is in the greatest danger, when her children cease to labour, watch and pray.

Which leads us, as was proposed,

II To point out the duty of those, who wish well to spiritual Jerusalem, and especially of her watchmen. And,

1. They should realize, that this is a great and good work. Nehemiah considered the building of Jerusalem, a great work. It was so. It was preparing a place for the worship of God ; for the security and peace of his people.

How great, then, is the work of the gospel ministry ! The design of this is, to edify the people of God in the most holy faith ; to bring sinners to repentance and the acknowledgment of the truth. This work is to prepare a seed to serve Christ and inherit his heavenly kingdom. In this, angels rejoice ; the Redeemer sees of the travail of his soul ; the Triune God is glorified. Paul counted it an honour, that he was put into the ministry. And to Timothy he writes, *This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.* To stimulate Zion's friends to unremitted exertions for her prosperity, let them realize the great, good, honourable, interesting nature of this work.

2. In order to faithful and successful labours in the ministry, the servants of Christ must feel their own insufficiency, and their dependence on God. Men may try their own strength and skill in this great work, but God will confound their language and their schemes, and Babel will be the result. Peter's sad fall contains a solemn caution against a self-confident, self-sufficient spirit. Human nature is essentially the same in all ; and God declares, *Cursed is man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm.*

A sense of insufficiency and a humble reliance on God, are essential qualifications for a faithful servant of Christ. It is God who calls his ministers, prepares them for the work, and crowns their labours with success.

This is a truth which the great apostle of the Gentiles realized, and often expressed. 1 Cor. xv. 10, *But by the grace of God I am what I am : and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain ; but I laboured more abundantly than they all ; yet not I but the grace of God which was with me.* 2 Cor. ii. 16. *And who is sufficient for these things ?* And chap. iii. 5, 6, *Not that we are sufficient of*

ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God, who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament.

Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah, who were successively leading characters in the great work of rebuilding Jerusalem, realized, that the Lord stirred them up, encouraged, strengthened and qualified them by his good hand, which was upon them.

3. Ministers should be sensible, that they are not alone in this work. All good men are contributing to forward it. Ministers of the gospel, like Nehemiah, are called to lead in the business; but, they have many helpers, many who are daily labouring and praying for the establishment and peace of spiritual Jerusalem.

All the angels in heaven are on their side. Heb. i. 14, *Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of salvation?* These are powerful beings. What havoc did a single angel make in the host of Assyria, in one night! He slew a hundred and eighty-five thousand! The holy angels are not only powerful, but vastly numerous; and all on the side of God's servants and people.

Further, for the encouragement of ministers, Jehovah himself is engaged in this great work. He is not only encouraging and strengthening his servants to proceed with their labour; sending his angels to assist them; but also, he himself, is with them. Matt. xxviii. 20, *Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.* Realizing these things, may not the ministers of Christ proceed with alacrity in their work, exclaiming, *If God be for us, who can be against us?*

4. The servants of Christ, who desire that this great work should prosper, must be much engaged in prayer. God is ready to instruct, guide, encourage and strengthen his people, if they ask. Luke xi. 13, *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.*

The success of ministers' labours is depending on the divine blessing. Said Paul, *I have planted and Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.* And the Lord declared by the prophet, *I will yet for this, be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.*

Ezra and Nehemiah, considering the magnitude of the work, in which they were engaged, convoked the people, and spent solemn seasons of public fasting and prayer. Besides these seasons, they often poured out their souls to God, in their private capacity.

Of how much more importance is the spiritual city! And how incumbent is it on every wise master builder, to spend much time at the throne of grace!

5. Those, who are carrying on the great work of the gospel ministry, must be diligent; must not suffer themselves to be interrupted. Some of the schemes of the enemies of religion, to prevent the diligence, faithfulness and success of Christ's servants, we have exhibited. And also, that these servants have dangerous foes *within*—their own remaining corruptions. He who would be successful, must be watchful; must be diligent in the Lord's business, and undertake none of satan's. Nehemiah would not be diverted from his work. Surely, then, nothing ought to interrupt the christian minister.

Let me inquire of the Lord's servants ; will you leave your great work, because the enemies of God and religion scoff at you ? Similar characters, we have seen, scoffed at Ezra and Nehemiah ; but this did not hinder them. The antideluvians undoubtedly made sport of Noah ; but he proceeded and built the ark. The Jews and others insulted Immanuel in his last agonies ; but, *he finished his great work.* There were some who mocked, on the memorable day of Pentecost ; but this did not hinder the preaching of the apostles, nor the subsequent effusions of the Holy Ghost. Paul, when preaching the gospel, was called a babbler ; but he did not, on this account, *cease to babble.* Having these illustrious examples before them, the true servants of Jesus will imitate them.

Will you cease from your labours, because the wicked rail, and rage, and threaten ? No : you will not regard them, except with pity, and prayers for their reformation.

Will you be allured from this great work by the amusements, pleasures or employments of this world ? No : the servant of Christ has a higher calling, business of infinite importance, and is charged to give himself wholly to it.

Do sinners misrepresent the doctrines of grace and christian experiences ? And do they draw alarming inferences, from the plain truths, which the Lord requires his servants to preach ? The servants of Christ should simply let them know, that their controversy is with God, and continue in their great work.

Nehemiah had four messages to go and hold a conference with Sanballat and others. He answered, *I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down : why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you ?* An open letter was next sent, desiring him to come and take counsel with them ; for there were such and such reports circulated about him. Nehemiah replied, *There are no such things done as thou sayest ; but thou feignest them out of thine own heart.* He was too well acquainted with the Samaritans, to be alarmed by their misrepresentations and falsehoods ; or to wish for their counsel.

Ministers of Christ ought to be as well acquainted with temporizing christians. These often profess amazing solicitude for those, who contend for the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel, and vital piety. And, after they have joined in fabricating and spreading evil reports, they would fain counsel and warn the contenders for the faith, to be more cautious and prudent.

But, let christian ministers remember, that they are doing a great work ; that God's word and Spirit are sufficient for their direction ; and that they have no leisure to *attend* to, and no disposition to *follow* the maxims of prudence, which the enemies of God's word and work suggest.

Suppose they are told by their pretended friends, that their property, their place, or even their lives are in danger, if they continue their work ; and that it becomes them to provide for their own security. Nehemiah was persuaded by a prophet, in whom he had placed confidence, to leave his work and shut himself up in the temple. *For, said he, they will come and slay thee ; yea, in the night will they come and slay thee.* The heroic reply of Nehemiah should be adopted by every servant of Jesus, in like circumstances, *Should such a*

6. Christian ministers, who would proceed vigorously in their great work, must put on the whole armour of God, and commence soldiers. And they are authorised to direct all who would forward the work, to build with their weapons in their hands. Nehemiah and the Jews, for a time, did thus; and their enemies were afraid to attack them. The weapons of the christian warfare are of a different kind, not carnal, but spiritual; yet they are mighty through God, not only against the powers of earth, but also of *hell*. See Eph. vi. 10—19. With this armour the servants of the Lord should always be equipped, and stand prepared, either to defend themselves, or attack their enemies. Were those, who wish well to Zion, to take such a position, her foes would either be intimidated and give up the contest, or hurl their fiery darts in vain.

INFERENCES.

1. The great work, on which we have been discoursing, will be completed. The church is founded on a rock, and Christ has said, *The gates of hell shall not prevail against it*. All the opposition of men and devils will not prevent Jehovah's accomplishing, by his word and Spirit, that which he pleaseth. The elect of God will be called in, and kept by his power, through faith unto salvation. In a word, we have seen that GOD is engaged in this great work; a regular inference is, It will be accomplished.

2. By this subject, christians are severely reprov'd. How slothful, how negligent are the generality of professed disciples! How prone to be diverted from their proper employment, to be conformed to this world! The conduct of Nehemiah and others reprov'es us. Let us take warning—let us turn at God's *reproof*, that we may escape the more severe chastisement of his *rod*.

3. In the light of this subject, opposers of this great work may see that their cause is desperate. Their controversy is with God. And, though for wise and holy reasons, he may allow them some temporary and partial successes, they must eventually fall. And, even while Zion's foes are triumphing, the great work is advancing, and God is using these very foes to advance it. They are rods, with which he scourges his people for their sluggishness. They are made instruments, in exciting the people of God to watchfulness, diligence and prayer. Drowsy christians are roused up from their spiritual slumbers and brought into action. A distinction is made between tares and wheat; and all classes of people have their attention excited, to know what is truth. Psalm lxxvi. 10. *Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain*. Thus, the weapons of satan and his agents are turned against themselves. The more the people of God were afflicted in Egypt, the more they multiplied and grew. The foes of this work, in taking the life of Christ, intended to subvert his religion; but this was the very method appointed of God to establish it. The more the church was persecuted, in apostolic times, the more it flourished—the greater trials the apostles experienced, the more bold and zealous they were in preaching the gospel. Vain, as well as impious are the attempts of the wicked—they will be defeated—and except they repent they will all likewise *perish*.

Finally, let us apply the subject to the present solemn and interesting occasion.

Our Brother in the ministry, whose installation we are about to attend, will feel the propriety of our applying this subject to him.

Dear Sir, you are not unacquainted with the magnitude of the work, which, by the great Head of the church, is committed to gospel ministers. You have been solemnly inducted into office—have taken part of this great work, and have had abundant evidence that your labour has not been in vain, in the Lord. You have experienced of late sore perplexities and trials: we trust also, that the grace of God has abounded for your consolation and comfort. Will the Lord grant, that the things, which have taken place among this people, may turn out for the furtherance of the gospel. May your personal trials, instead of discouraging, render you more bold, zealous and faithful in declaring the counsel of God. Your experience in the ministry, for almost twenty six years, precludes the necessity of much being said by a younger brother. With the arduous nature of this work you are acquainted; also with the high responsibility of those, who undertake it. Ministers are to watch for souls, as those who must give an account. You will pray sinners, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God—you will labour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace among christians. In the strength of the Lord, dear brother, take courage; proceed in your work with unabated ardour; and will the King in Zion grant you to see his pleasure prospering in your hands.

The church, and the society lately associated with it, claim our next attention. We rejoice in the firm persuasion that the prayers of this church have been heard, for the continuance of their beloved Pastor. We rejoice, that the hearts of so many, who are not of this body, have been inclined to associate with it. We congratulate you on the unanimity which has marked your late proceedings, and that you are this day to behold the accomplishment of your desires. We pray God, that no root of bitterness springing up may trouble you. Remember that not only ministers, but all men should be engaged in the great work, on which we have been discoursing. It is incumbent on you to encourage the heart, and strengthen the hands of your minister. Let him experience your friendly, kind and liberal attention. Pray for him, that he may be faithful; and that God would make him instrumental in establishing and comforting his children, and convincing and converting sinners. *To God, we commend you, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.*

Finally, this is a solemn season to all present. The transactions of this day, and all the transactions of our lives will be disclosed at the day of judgment. Let us then lay aside every weight, and run with patience the race which is set before us, looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.

THE CHARGE,*

GIVEN BY REV. NOBLE EVERITT.

Dear brethren and friends ; we rejoice at the union and affection which appear so remarkably to prevail among you, which have led to the solemn transactions of this day, affording bright prospects to the lovers of Zion, of the advancement of the glorious cause of Christ, among this afflicted church and people : trusting that your prayers have ascended to the throne of grace, and received an answer of peace ; and that you are, by the great Head of the church, prepared to receive, joyfully, so great a blessing, as, we trust, he is now about to confer on you ; not of earthly possessions and wealth ; but the confirmation of one set over you in the Lord, who shall feed the sheep and lambs of the flock, and break to you the bread of life.

And now, in conformity with the result of the Council, dear brother, Jonathan Burr, we install you over this flock, consisting of the first Congregational Church in Sandwich and the Calvinistic Society associated with it.

We therefore charge you, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing, and his kingdom,—Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. For the time has come, when many, who profess Christ before men, will not endure sound doctrine.—But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

Take heed to yourself.—Consider that you have an immortal soul of more real value than all the material universe ; and, that were there nothing of more importance to call your attention, that alone is sufficient to engage your utmost solicitude for its salvation, from your earliest existence, to the close of your mortal life. Therefore, on that account, alone, we may, with propriety, charge you to keep your body under, and bring it into subjection ; and in all things, to live according to the precepts of the gospel, knowing that your eternal state of happiness or woe depends on the character you form in this state of probation. How awful must it be, after you have preached, and preached the truth to others, for you yourself to be a cast-away ! To be cast away for want of love to those all important truths, which you have clearly exhibited to others !

But, beloved brother, we hope better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

Still we may enjoin these things on you from more powerful motives than the salvation of your own soul : the salvation of the souls of those who hear you, taken collectively, is far more important, than your own eternal well-being. Therefore, take heed to yourself.—And let your good example be set, not only before those, over whom

* The Charge was delivered extempore, and is perhaps varied in some expressions.

the Holy Ghost hath made you an overseer, who are looking to you as their teacher, by example as well as by precept; but also before those who are without, even those who are the enemies of the cross of Christ, for they are watching for your halting.

Take heed to the flock over which you are an overseer. Think of the worth of their immortal souls; and let a solemn sense thereof lie much on your mind. Shun not to declare the whole counsel of God, to your hearers, saints and sinners. Hold up before them plainly the way of reconciliation with God, and those important truths, which are most disagreeable to corrupt nature. Such truths are wonderfully calculated to do honour to the Great Head of the Church, and are the principal things which all the ministers of Christ ought to have in view, in all their preaching to their hearers: for his honour infinitely outweighs all other considerations; and we may observe also that the same preaching which is best calculated to honour God, is best calculated to save those who hear.

Be entreated to consider that you and all other ministers of Christ must appear at his bar, with all their hearers. And awful for unfaithful ministers to meet those of their charge, at the left hand of their Judge, who have lost their own souls, and have been the occasion of the eternal perdition of many of their hearers!

Oh, how can a poor condemned minister bear the keen reproaches of his lost hearers! "*You never faithfully warned me of this place of torment and endless wo!*" Oh, who can describe or even conceive the wretchedness of such a lost minister, to be forever upbraided by his miserable hearers, both sinking under the inconceivable weight of God's wrath in eternal despair!

But on the other hand, how joyful and blessed will be the meeting of those, who are found faithful to God, their own souls and the souls of those who have been their hearers, and with them made partakers of the boundless grace of God!

On that joyful occasion, the faithful minister may say, Lord, behold here am I and these dear trophies of thy rich grace; who have been turned from sin to righteousness, through the instrumentality of such a worthless creature as I am!

How joyful then to hear the approbation of his Judge, Well done thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. How delightful must it be to be accompanied by a goodly number of his dear people, who will freely join with him in ascribing all the glory of their salvation, to the Sacred THREE forever and ever. AMEN.

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP,

BY REV. HENRY LINCOLN, OF FALMOUTH.

“Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.” The happy union of christians, which peculiarly marks their characters, is formed and cemented by love, which restores and preserves the image of God within the soul; for “God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him,” and by this shall all men know that we are the disciples of Jesus Christ. This is “the fulfilling of the law, the bond of perfectness”—and that sacred indissoluble cord, which binds the souls of God’s children together. This is necessary to form the union, and preserve the fellowship of the churches. There is no other tie but may be broken; but by this, christians are all one in Jesus Christ, and “as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”—There is no stability to *form* without this *power*. It is this, which brings christians to realize one great common interest in Christ, to be preserved and cherished at the expense of every subordinate object—which connects ministers and people together in the closest union, so that when “one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or, one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”—It is this which leads us mutually to counsel, support and comfort one another amidst all the evils of this inhospitable world, to “bear one another’s burthens,” and thus to “fulfil the law of Christ.”—For the revival, increase and support of this we are wholly dependent on divine influences. Should we not then be very thankful that the Lord has been pleased to grant a plenteous out-pouring of his holy Spirit, hereby to warm our hearts, to strengthen our minds, to confirm our union, and to prepare us for those seasons of affliction, which are for the trial of our faith, and the exercise of our patience? We rejoice this day to see its happy effects; and that God has been pleased to preserve our beloved brother and this dear church, in the sharpest seasons of trial, from discouragement, from dissolution and dispersion, in mutual confidence and love.—As external circumstances may have rendered it expedient, we are pleased that this day our sister church has renewed her request, that her dear pastor should still remain with them, and that the Lord has disposed his heart to listen to her proposals in concurrence with this newly associated Society. United in the same common faith, and as we humbly trust, heirs together of the grace of God, and interested for the prosperity of Zion, we, the brethren of sister churches, have here convened to join with you in our prayers and counsels, to testify our fellowship with you in behalf of our brethren, and to assist in your establishment, according to the faith and order of the gospel. Between the ministers and churches of our common Lord, there is a mystical union and holy love subsisting, which the world knoweth not of, and their christian fellowship is expressed as circumstances may require. On occasions like the present, it is usual, according to apostolic example, to testify the fellowship of the churches by giving the right hand, and on me this solemn office has now devolved.—

Beloved brother in the Lord, in the name of the ecclesiastical council here convened, give me leave then to tender to you the *right hand of fellowship*. By this we testify to you our approbation of your faith, and confidence in your abilities and disposition, as a minister of Christ to preach the gospel, and to “feed the church of GOD, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”—We hereby salute you in the Lord, and declare to you our christian fellowship and love for you and “all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseer.” We hereby express to you our readiness ever to assist you with our prayers, our counsels, and our labours; and in all seasons of trial, persecution and affliction, to take an affectionate part with you in the all-important interests of our common Lord and Master. Go on, dear brother, in the strength of the Lord, and in the power of his might, faithful in duty, patient in sufferings, and firm under trials, encouraged with the blessed promise, “be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”

For more than twenty-three years, dear brother, we have been indulged the happy privilege of living together in the ministry, in uninterrupted harmony and love. We have to lament that the former part of this period has been a season of great darkness, coldness and declension in the churches. But, blessed be God, he has at length lifted upon us the light of his countenance, poured out his quickening and enlivening Spirit upon the dear people of our charge, and we have lived to see a day of the great Redeemer’s power and love. In this we have rejoiced, yea, and we will rejoice.—Under your faithful ministry, may the Lord continue to enlarge the borders of his Zion here, that, when called by death from your holy office, you may be enabled to say, “Lord, now let thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.”

As a reciprocal expression of your love for us and ours in the common faith, we now expect from you, dear brother, in return, the *right hand of fellowship*; hereby expressing to us your undissembled love and readiness with your dear church to afford us, at all times and in all seasons, your prayers, and to assist us by your counsels and your labours in building up the blessed cause of our common Lord and Master.—May we be “fellow-helpers of each other’s joy.”—The Lord direct that you, your dear church and people may be lasting blessings to each other—give you many souls as seals to your ministry, and, when he who is the believer’s life shall appear, enable you and all of us to give up our account with joy. Then may we hear this blessed plaudit of our Judge, “Well done, good and faithful servants, ye have been faithful over a few things, I will make you rulers over many things, enter ye into the joy of your Lord.”
