

SERMON 14

THE SOLEMN CHARGE OF A CHRISTIAN MINISTER CONSIDERED A SERMON
PREACHED AT THE ORDINATION OF THE REVMR. JOHN RYLAND, ON THE 26TH
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2 TIMOTHY 4:1, 2

"I charge thee, therefore, 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."

AS that Part of the Service of this Day is allotted unto me to address you, my dear Brother, who have now taken upon you the Care of this Church, I shall do it in an Attempt to explain this *awful* Charge of the *Apostle* to *Timothy*.

This Charge consists of two Parts,

I. The Preface.

II. The Matter of the Charge, or the several Branches of Duty thus solemnly enjoined on him.

I. *I would briefly consider the Preface, I charge thee, therefore, before God, who is infinitely Holy, All-knowing, and Immense in every Perfection: And the Lord Jesus Christ, who tries the Reins, whose Ambassador you are, to whom you are accountable, whose Gospel you are to preach, whose Church you are to feed, guide, and preside among. Who shall judge the Quick and the Dead. All Judgment is committed to him, as God-Man, and Mediator: For the Father hath given him Authority to execute Judgment also, because he is the Son of Man. The Subjects of his Judgments are the Quick and the Dead. The Quick intend such of Mankind, who will remain and be alive at his Coming: And the Dead are such, as in all Ages of the World have passed under the Stroke of Death, whole Spirits returned to God who gave them, and their Bodies to Corruption and Dust.*

This Judgment he will execute at his Appearing. The Son of God hath already appeared in our World at the Time appointed of the Father, which is called the Fulness of the Time. Once in the End of the World he appeared to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself. When he had done and suffered all that was necessary to the eternal Redemption of the Church, he sat down on the right Hand of the Majesty on high; and the Heavens must receive him until the Times of Restitution; when he will

appear the second Time, without Sin, unto Salvation. Then every Eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all Kindreds of the Earth shall wail because of him. Farther, this Judgment he will execute at his Kingdom. He now rules over all; for all Power in Heaven and in Earth is given unto him. He is the Head of all Principality and Power in Heaven, and by him Kings reign, and Princes decree Justice. By him Princes rule, and Nobles, even all the Judges of the Earth. Besides, he exercises a special Government over the Church: For he is that King, whom God hath set on his Holy Hill of Zion. He gives Laws unto her, which are wisely calculated to preserve Order, Peace and Harmony, and he defends her from the Rage and Fury of her numerous and potent Enemies. So that he now exercises a regal Authority. Hereafter he will reign before his Ancients gloriously. He will take to himself his great Power, and reign, tho' the Nations be angry, and shower down Wrath and Vengeance on all his and the Church's Enemies, who will be offended at his Dignity and Glory.

The Sense of this solemn Preface is, As thou regardest the Honor of God, his Authority, and art desirous to approve thyself to him, *diligently and faithfully* attend unto the Duties of thy Station in the Church: As thou expectest to appear before *the Judgment-Seat of Christ*, neglect not those important Services which are proper to thy Character, who art his Ambassador, and to whom thou must give an Account of thy Conduct, in that high and honorable Office. This is a very *awful* and solemn Charge indeed; and, doubtless, those Duties which the *Apostle* introduces with such Solemnity must be of the greatest Importance to the Glory of God, and the Good of his Church; which I shall now proceed to consider.

II. *The Matter of this Charge consists of several Branches.*

First. *Preach the Word*; The Word of God; The Word of Truth; The Word of Life; The Gospel of Salvation: The Gospel of the Grace of God: Of the true Grace of God, and not the *Counterfeit* of it. Unto these Things all will assent who profess Christianity, how different soever their Sentiments are concerning Doctrines. *Papists, Socinians, Arminians, and others*, must allow the Truth of what is expressed in there several Modes of speaking. And, therefore, you must permit me to declare in an *explicit* Manner, my Apprehensions of Christian Principles. And I would propose a Query, and give an Answer to it.

Query. How may we know that any Doctrine is that of *the true Grace of God*?

Answ. If it exalts the Glory of the Grace of God, as the *sole and entire* Cause of Salvation: If it humbles the Creature, and *excludes all Boasting*: If it provides for the Honor of the Law and Justice of God: If it is a solid and sure Ground of *strong Consolation* to the Saints: If it is a Doctrine *according to Godliness*. There are *infallible* Rules, whereby you may form your Judgment of Doctrines. No Principle can be true, which is not calculated to subserve and secure these important Ends; and, therefore, it will be your Wisdom to examine all Sentiments in Divinity by them,

and, as you shall find them agreeing, or disagreeing with those Rules, embrace, or reject them. The following Doctrines, in my Apprehension, upon Enquiry will be found Truths by those Rules; and, therefore, in my Opinion, you ought to preach them.

1st. Publish the Doctrine of God's *free, sovereign, and eternal* Love. It is his *good Pleasure*, and *irrespective* of any Motive in the Objects of it. Divine Love is *sovereign*, and is fixed on whomsoever it was the Will of God favorably to regard. *God hath Mercy on whom he will have Mercy*. Again, it is eternal: *I have loved thee with an everlasting Love; and, therefore, with loving Kindness have I drawn thee*. The Father hath loved the Elect, as he hath loved Christ; and *he loved him before the Foundation of the World*; and, consequently, they were interested in the Favor of God before the Commencement of Time.

2dly. Preach the Doctrine of *personal and unconditional* Election to everlasting Life. This is a Doctrine clearly expressed in the Holy Scripture: *According as he hath chosen us in him before the Foundation of the World, that we should be holy and without Blame before him in Love. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called. Because God hath from the Beginning chosen you to Salvation*. And this is an Act of free Grace: *According to the Election of Grace*. Again, it is an *irrevocable* Decree. *The Foundation of God standeth sure; having this Seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his*.

3dly. Preach the Doctrine of the *invariable* Acceptation of the Persons of the Elect with God in Christ their Head. They were *chosen in him: Grace was given them in him, and in him were they, preserved*, before Calling, and in order to it. As Adam was the Representative of his Seed, they were considered in him, *they sinned in him, and fell with him in his first Transgression*. By his Act of Disobedience they were *made Sinners*, and with him came under the Condemnation of the Covenant of Works: So all the Elect, who are the *Seed* of Christ, were considered in him, and represented by him, as the Head of the Covenant of Grace, and their Persons always were accepted with God, as viewed in Christ their Representative; *having made us accepted in the Beloved*. Nor is there the least Inconsistency between these Things, *viz.* The Condemnation of the Elect in their *natural* Head, and the Acceptation of their Persons in Christ their *spiritual* Head. It is to me *astonishing*, that any of those, who grant the Truth of their actual Union with Adam, by Virtue of a divine Constitution, and their Guiltiness and Condemnation upon his Sin, in Consequence of that Union with him, should deny their *real and actual* Union with Christ, by Virtue of a divine Constitution, in the Covenant of Grace, and the Acceptation of their Persons with God on that Foundation. Let me advise you carefully to take a *complete* View of every Subject, about which you shall at any Time treat. This is absolutely necessary: For, by a *partial* View of a Doctrine, many Persons are led into Mistakes concerning it. I will give you an Instance or two of this Kind.

Sometimes it is objected to the Doctrine of *absolute* and *unconditional* Election to eternal Life, that, if this is true, then Holiness here is not necessary to Happiness hereafter. If it was considered, that Election Is a Decree to make Men holy in Time, as a *Meetness* for the Enjoyment of Felicity, in Eternity, such an Objection could not, with any Shew of Reason or Justice, be raised against that Doctrine. Again, it is objected to that View which God takes of the Elect in Christ, that it hath a Tendency to make Men easy under a Prevalency of Sin, or to fatter themselves that they are in a fare State, tho' they are under the Dominion of Lust. But, if it was considered, that the Acceptation of the Persons of the Elect in Christ is that Foundation on which Grace is communicated to them, and that without Holiness none can have the least *Evidence* that they are of the Number of those, whole Persons are accepted with God in Christ, a Man must have a very small Degree of Discernment indeed, who is not able to see that such an Objection is *groundless* and *wholly foreign* to the Nature of the Doctrine. That Reasoning is always *false*, in any Science, which proceeds upon a *partial* View of a Subject; and those Consequences, which are drawn from it, have nothing more than the *Appearance* of Weight; in Fact they are mere *Wind* and *Emptiness*: And yet, sometimes *good* and *wise* Men in *popular* Discourse are guilty of this Weakness, and frequently they are so, when discoursing on this important Subject.

Farther, be sure to distinguish well. Without this, you may sometimes find yourself at a Loss to answer Objections against the most momentous Doctrines of the Gospel; among which I reckon that of God's *eternal* and *invariable* Love to the Persons of his People. Some will say, if this is true, then God is as well pleased with them, when they neglect their Duty, and sin against him, as he is, when they are obedient to his Commands. In answer to which, you must distinguish between God's Love to *the Persons of his People*, and his *Approbation* or *Disapprobation* of their Actions: Neither of the latter is included in the first; they are both quite of distinct Consideration from it. His Displeasure with their sinful Actions, and the *awful* Tokens of it, are not at all inconsistent with his invariable Love to their Persons.

4thly. Preach the Doctrine of *full* and *proper* Atonement, and Satisfaction for sin, by the Death of Christ. Herein you will consider the Origin of it, viz. the *sovereign* Will of God, which is clearly seen in determining to admit of a Surety. This was not a *Relaxation* of the Law, either in its Commands or Threatening's; but a *Commutation* of Persons, or a Purpose to permit another to take our Obligation upon himself, in order to our Release. Again, it was an Act of *Sovereignty* in God to appoint and provide this Surety for us. Besides, you must shew who this Surety is: That he is the Son of God, and truly Divine, the Father's Equal in every Perfection: *The Brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person: In the Form of God*; and that *he thought it no Robbery to be equal with God*: That he is truly Man, of the same Nature with us, but absolutely free from that moral Impurity which

attends us: That he took *real* Flesh, but only *the Likeness of sinful Flesh*: Moreover, that he is God and Man united.

This is one eminent Branch of the Mystery of Godliness. *Without Controversy, great is the Mystery of Godliness. God was manifest in the Flesh. The Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us.* You must shew his Coming under the Law, in order to our Redemption from it, as a Covenant. *When the Fulness of the Time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a Woman, made under the Law, to redeem them who were under the Law.* You will observe, that, as he came under the Law for us, our Crimes were imputed to him. *All we, like Sheep, have gone astray: The Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all. He who knew no Sin was made Sin for us. He bore our Sins in his own Body on the Tree.* As we are made righteous by the Imputation of Christ's Obedience to us, who in ourselves are unrighteous, so he was made Sin by the Imputation of our Sins to him, who in himself was absolutely spotless and innocent. Farther, you will observe, that he was made a Curse: *Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us.* God drew all the *keenly-pointed* Arrows of his Law, and directed them against our Surety; they penetrated deeply into his Breast, and gave him Wounds inexpressible. And I think that you must necessarily discern, that he endured the Wrath and Vengeance of God, unto which we were obnoxious in Consequence of Sin. *Awake, O Sword, against my Shepherd, and against the Man that is my Fellow; smite the Shepherd,* was the awful Language of the Father in the Character of a Judge, punishing our Sins in the Person of Christ our Surety.

This Doctrine will lead you to treat of the Covenant of Grace, wherein this *amazing* Transaction was agreed on and settled between the Divine Father and the Eternal Son. And from hence I am persuaded that you must conclude, that Sin is expiated, *Transgression finished, and Sin made an End of,* as to its Guilt: That the Curse of the Law is removed, or the Persons of God's People are delivered from it: That there is *no Fury in God* against them; but that *he is pacified towards them for all that they have done.* For, *Peace is made by the Blood of Christ's Cross: And we, being justified by his Blood, shall be saved from Wrath thro' him.* Satisfaction was given both to Law and Justice for all our Sins by the Death of Christ; and, therefore, Reconciliation is a *necessary and immediate* Effect of his Death. From hence it evidently follows, that the Death of Christ could not be of universal Extent. *He who shall undertake to prove, that Christ made Satisfaction for the Sins of no Man, if he died for all Men, will have a very easy Task before him.* Nor do any of those, that understand themselves, believe the Doctrine of proper and full Satisfaction for Sin by the Sufferings of Christ, who embrace the Opinion of the universal Extent of his Death. It is impossible that they should so do, tho' they speak of his *Atonement, Ransom, and Satisfaction,* whereby they sometimes deceive and impose upon the *Unwary.*

My Brother, let me advise you to study thoroughly this important Article of the Christian Faith: Make yourself Master of the Objections of the *Socinians* against it, and learn to answer them solidly; and then you will have nothing to fear from some others, whose Sentiments in this Point *have no final Affinity with theirs*, how much soever they pretend to be their Adversaries on this weighty Subject. By a close Enquiry into this Doctrine, you will obtain a clear View of the *sovereign* Grace and Mercy, Wisdom, Holiness, and *inflexible* Justice of God, as displayed in our Salvation, and such a Prospect of the Harmony of all the Attributes of God therein, as will fill your Soul with Delight and Astonishment, and will be an *unshaken* Foundation of your Hope, in the *darkest* and *most trying Seasons*, you may meet withal in your Christian Race: Which are very sufficient Reasons to engage you unto an *assiduous* Study of this *momentous* Doctrine of our holy Religion, and to cause you to use your *utmost Efforts* to defend it, by whomsoever it is opposed.

5thly. Preach the Doctrine of Justification by the Righteousness of Christ. In treating on this Subject, it will be needful to shew, that Christ was not a *proper* Subject of the Covenant of Works on his own Account. His human Nature, tho' in Union with the Son of God, is, and ever will be, under a Law; that necessarily results from the Dependence of it upon, and its Relation unto God, as a Creature. The Angels are under a Law. The Saints in Heaven are under a Law, and eternally will be so; for it is impossible, that any Creature should not be in a State of Subjection to the Will of God; and the divine Will is a Law, and everlastingly binding on the Creature. This is inseparable from the Relation which is between God and the Creature. The Covenant of Works is *more than a Law*; it is a Law with Sanction, it promises Life on condition of Obedience, and threatens Death in case of Disobedience. Now, as Christ was God as well as Man, it was incompatible with the Dignity of his Person to come under the Obligation of the Covenant of Works on his own Account. Besides, as he was not a natural Descendant of *Adam*, nor related to him, as a Member, whom he represented, he could not have any Concern with that Covenant, which was made with him as the Head of all who naturally descend from him, but by a special Constitution and Appointment of God, for Ends not respecting himself, but others. These Things will enable you to answer the most *plausible* Objection against the Doctrine under Consideration, *viz.* that Christ stood obliged to fulfill the Law for himself, and, therefore, could not fulfil it for others: Also hence you will be furnished with an *irrefragable* Argument in favor of this glorious Truth. For, if it is true, that Christ could not come under the Covenant of Works on his own Account, then it evidently follows, that his becoming a Subject of that Covenant was for others, and his Obedience to the Terms of it is intended for the Benefit and Advantage of others.

Again, his Righteousness is accepted of the Father for his People, and is by him imputed to them. Farther, they are justified therein, and thereby are *made Heirs*

according to the Hope of eternal Life. Once more, you must shew, that the Law is *magnified and made honorable* by Christ's Subjection to it, and his Fulfilling of it. And that, therefore, the Wisdom and Righteousness of God, as well as his rich Grace and Mercy, illustriously shine in this most admirable Constitution.

6thly. Preach the Doctrine of the efficacious Grace of God. Here you must shew the Necessity of Regeneration, which will lead you to treat of the Depravity of our Nature. Two Things are true of us all in a natural State: One is, that we cannot come to Christ: The other is, that we will not come to him. Say some, *our Cannot consists in a Will-not*; but it is a very great Mistake; they are distinct Things, and not the same. We cannot, as we are destitute of a Principle of Life; and we will not, as we are the Subjects of vicious Habits, which determine us against such an Act. I am sorry to find any to confound Things that are so manifestly distinct, with a View to give Countenance to what may with far less Danger be given up, than that of our natural Inability to act Faith on Christ. What Opinion soever requires the Denial of our Want of Power to believe to support it, ought eternally to sink; for true it is, we are *dead*, and cannot act spiritually, no, *not in the least Degree.*

Again, you must shew, that the Grace of God is the sole and *effectual* Cause of our Regeneration: That it is the *sole* Cause of it: That Men do not, nor can, prepare themselves for it: That the Grace of Regeneration is not given to any on Conditions, or because of fit Dispositions and Qualifications in them for it: And that the Production of Holiness in us is without the Concurrence of our Will with the Grace of God. Besides, you are to shew the Efficacy of the Grace of God. That, as Light sprang up into Existence in the old Creation upon God's saying, *Let there be Light*, so in the new Creation spiritual Light rises into Being in our dark Minds immediately upon God's willing it to be. As Grace in us is a Principle of new Life, the divine Influence to give it Existence must necessarily be effectual unto its Production: For God can never attempt what he is not able to affect. He wills not to do all he is able to perform; but he *always* and *infallibly* accomplishes what he designs: *If he will work, none shall let. He takes away the Heart of Stone out of our Flesh, and gives us an Heart of Flesh. We are made willing in the Day of his Power. And we are his Workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works. We make not ourselves to differ. Faith is not of ourselves, it is the Gift of God. And it is Gad that worketh in us, both to will, and to do, of his good Pleasure.*

7thly. Preach the sweet, glorious, and important Doctrine of the final Perseverance of the Saints. The Arguments are many, by which this precious Truth may be established, besides direct scriptural Proofs of it, viz. God's unchangeable and inseparable Love. His unalterable Purpose. *His Counsel shall stand, and he will do all his Pleasure.* That sufficient Provision of Grace, which he hath made in the Covenant of Grace, in order to it, which *is all our Salvation and all our Desire.* His Relations unto his People. He is their Father, for he *hath predestinated them to the*

Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to himself. And, because they are Sons, he sends forth the Spirit of his Son into their Hearts. Being Sons, they are Heirs, Heirs of God, and Joint-Heirs with Christ. God stands in a conjugal Relation to them. Their Maker is their Husband. He hath betrothed them to himself for ever. Again, their Union with Christ is a strong Argument in Favor of this Doctrine. He is their Head, and they are his Members: Of his Flesh, and of his Bones. Besides, they are his Purchase: They are not their own, they are bought with a Price, which Price is the Blood of Christ. They are redeemed, not with Silver and Gold, as with those corruptible Things; but with the precious Blood of Christ. Those whom he hath purchased, at such Expense, he will never lose, if all the Power he is possessed of is sufficient to preserve them safe. Moreover, they are justified by his Blood and Righteousness: And Justification gives a Right unto, and certainly will be succeeded by Glory. Whom he justified, them he also glorified. Farther, the In-dwelling of the Spirit in Believers secures their Perseverance. I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever. He is in the Saints as a Well of Water, springing up into everlasting Life. And direct Scriptural Proofs of this comfortable Doctrine are many.

The Righteous shall hold on his Way, and he that hath clean Hands shall grow stronger and stronger. They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, that can never be moved. He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. And they shall not depart from me. The Lord will give Grace and Glory. And this is the Will of him that sent me, that whosoever seeth the Son, and believeth on him, might not perish, but have everlasting Life. My Sheep hear my Voice, and I know them; they follow me; I give to them eternal Life; they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my Hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's Hand. These Testimonies abundantly confirm the important Truth of the final Happiness of Believers. You will observe, that it is not intended, that in no Instance Sin shall gain a Prevalency in and over them: And that it is not designed, that God will not correct his disobedient Children; but that he will not kill them, as one observes. That he will humble and bring them to a Sense of their Duty again, either when a Stupor seizes them, or Sin prevails and breaks forth in them. That he will heal their Backslidings, and love them freely, and not turn away from them to do them good. And, therefore, they have the firmest Ground for a holy Confidence, in all their Conflicts, Trials, Temptations, and Distress of Soul, that he who hath begun a good Work in them will perform it until the Day of Christ. The Lord will not forsake the Work of his own Hand; but perfect that which concerneth his Saints.

If you try these Doctrines by the *Criteria* beforementioned, I think that you will easily, plainly, and fully discover, that they are the Doctrines of *the true Grace of God*. They certainly are calculated to exalt and enhance the Glory of divine Grace

in the Business of our Salvation. And they are wifely designed to *hide Pride from Man*, and to *exclude all Boasting* in him. Besides, these Sentiments are calculated to vindicate the Holiness, Righteousness, and Justice of God, in our Recovery and Salvation. Moreover, they are a solid and immoveable Ground of *strong Consolation to all who have fled for Refuge to lay hold on the Hope set before them*. Once more, they are Doctrines *according to Godliness*. A Scheme of Principles suited to ingenerate and maintain in the Minds of all those, whose Comfort is in them intended, Love to God, a holy Reverence of him, and most fervent Desires to obey and serve him in all Things. It is only the Want of an Acquaintance with their Nature, and the Prevalence of a legal Disposition in the Minds of Men, with a secret Love of Sin, how much soever they are filled with Terrors on account of it, which can cause them to entertain a contrary Opinion of these Doctrines. Such, who have any Experience of their Sweetness and Power, *are taught by them to deny all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World*.

Some Persons seem unwilling that these Doctrines should be preached, at least they don't approve of their being much insisted on. They will do well to consider, whether Heaven is likely to be an agreeable Place to them, or no: For there the Grace of God and the Glory of Christ are the *principal Subjects* the Minds of Men will be entertained withal unto Eternity: And, therefore, those, who don't now like to hear much said of there glorious Subjects, give but small Evidence of a Meetness for the heavenly State. Some, it may be, will say to you, it is most profitable to treat on practical Subjects chiefly, and to shew the Necessity of Holiness. This you ought by no Means to neglect; but, if you recommend the Practice of Duty upon an *evangelical* Foundation, and clearly shew what *true* Holiness is, and how it differs from *mere* Morality, I am greatly mistaken, if your Discourses of that Kind will meet with a *more cool* Reception from any, than from such sort of Persons.

Consider, my beloved Brother, you are shortly to appear before *the Judgment-Seat of Christ*: Let me, therefore, intreat you closely to examine what Doctrine God hath revealed, and preach it, yea preach it boldly, *whether Men will hear, or whether they will forbear*. If you do not, how will you be able to look our dear Lord Jesus in the Face?

Secondly. *Be instant in Season, out of Season*. You must abide and continue in this Labor, although you may meet with many Difficulties, Discouragements, and much Opposition in it: You must not think of quitting this Service, either on account of Reproaches cast on you by Enemies, or because you may be neglected by Friends. None of these Things should move you. Nor must you ever propose to disengage yourself from this Work by Views of secular Advantage, what Offers of that Kind soever may at any Time present. You ought to be diligent in this Service, and endeavor to be ready for it, at all Opportunities, and on all Occasions: *In Season, i.e.*

on the Lord's Days, which are stated Times for the Worship of God, and the Instruction and Edification of the Church: *Out of Season*, that is to say, you must labor to prepare for, and be willing to exercise your ministerial Talents, as often as the Church shall require you, whose Servant you are. If they have an Ear to hear, it will be your Duty to speak to them of the Things of God, as well out of as in Season: For the Gift of Preaching is bestowed upon you for their Sakes, and they have a Right to expect you to exercise it on every suitable Occasion, and you stand obliged to comply with their Desire in this Matter, as far as you are able.

Thirdly. *Reprove.* Two Things are signified by this Word, (ελεγχω), viz. to convince by Reasoning, and to give Reproof. You are *set for the Defense of the Gospel*, and it is your Business to vindicate the Truth of it, *by just and solid Reasoning*, in order to the Conviction of the Opposers of it. And herein it will be proper to proceed after this Manner.

1. Endeavour clearly to prove one Principle, which makes way for and leads on unto other Principles, and from which they follow. This Method is observed punctually by the Apostle *Paul* in his Epistle to *the Romans*. That Epistle is *argumentative*, and the Reasoning in it is clear, regular, and nervous.

2. You must shew how those Principles, which you design to establish, result from or follow upon that Doctrine; whereof evident Proof is already given.

3. It will be expected of you to answer Objections. In doing which you must observe what *Fallacy* is in them, and labor to make that plain, which will be a sufficient Refutation of them. And, if there is no Fallacy in them, then your Business will be to shew, that in Fact they are no Objections to that Truth, which you are engaged in the Vindication of, but consistent with it.

4. Let your Proofs of a Doctrine be clear Testimonies of Scripture. By which I do not mean, that the Proposition you intend to prove, must be in so many and in such a Form of Words found in the Scripture; but that the sense of that Proposition is agreeable to the Word of God. Give me leave to instance in two or three Things.

And, *1st*, God is one and three, one essentially, and three personally. *2dly*, We are justified by the Righteousness of Christ imputed to us. *3dly*, The Persons of the Elect were always accepted with God in Christ their Head. Neither of these is syllabically found in Scripture; but the Sense of each is plainly scriptural. Some who allow the two former dispute the Truth of the third, and object to it, because it is not syllabically contained in Scripture with just the same Propriety, and no more, as the *Anti-trinitarians* object to the Doctrine of the Trinity, because in Terms that Doctrine is not expressed in Scripture. This Method of arguing, how much soever it may be agreeable to some People, is *very weak*, and concludes *nothing at all*. For it is Thought, that is to be proved from Scripture; and, unto the Confirmation of that, it is not necessary that the Terms, wherein it is expressed, should be there found. Again, you must reprove the Haughtiness, disingenuity, and Impertinence of the

Enemies of the Gospel. Many such there are; and that Contempt and Reproach, which they frequently cast on sacred Truth, call for *severe* Reproof.

Fourthly. Rebuke. This is a Part of our Work which it is necessary for us to attend unto, though to ourselves it is not so pleasing as some other Parts of it. My Brother decline not to preach the Law, to open and explain it, deliver the whole Doctrine of it. Shew what it commands of Men, of all Men. Set before your Hearers that Misery which it threatens for a Violation of its Precepts: And shew the Equity and Justice of that Constitution. Never be afraid of being accounted and called by some, in a way of Reproach, for that Reason, a *legal* Preacher. *He who preaches the Gospel, also ought to preach the Law.* Follow you the Example of your *great Master* in this Matter, who explained the Law, and vindicated it from the *false* Glosses put upon it by the *Jews*, in his excellent Sermon *on the Mount*. Imitate the Apostle *Paul*, who in his *Epistles* delivers the Matter of the Law, as well as the glorious Truths of the Gospel; and proves the Equity and Justice of that Constitution, according to which all Men are obnoxious to eternal Death and Misery for having acted contrary to it. You must not consult the *Taste* and *Choice* of Men. Many, who are in the most deplorable Condition, love to have *smooth Things* declared unto them, and to have *Pillows* placed under their Armholes, wherein you can't gratify them, but at your own *Peril*. You must endeavor to be a *Boanerges, a Son of Thunder*, to Sinners of all Sorts.

The Manner of the Spirit's Work on the Hearts of Men, if you attend unto it, will happily guide you to fulfill this Part of your Charge. He directs the Arrows of the Law into the Heart of a poor Sinner, and then applies the precious *Balm* of the Covenant to heal the Wounds he has given. Besides it is proper to acquaint Believers, as much as in you lies, with the Nature of the Covenant of Works, and with their Misery, according to that legal Constitution, in order to excite in them Gratitude and Praise to God, for that great Salvation, which they obtain thro' *Jesus Christ*. It will be of Service to the Heirs of Heaven to be well informed of Hell, and of the Nature of *infernal* Misery, unto which their numerous Sins, and the Corruption of their Hearts, so justly rendered them obnoxious. Farther, it will be your Business to rebuke the *Remiss, Negligent, and Scandalous*. And also you may find it necessary sometimes to rebuke sharply erring Persons, *that they may be found in the Faith*.

Fifthly. Exhort. The Word signifies to comfort, as well as exhort, (*παρακαλεω*.)

1st. You must comfort *the Mourners in Zion*, by proposing to their Consideration the sweet Promises and precious Truths of the Gospel. Many under a spiritual Conviction of their Sin and Danger are afraid, that their Salvation is impossible. Shew such, that *all Things are possible with God*: That the Salvation of Sinners, even of *the Chief* of Sinners, is not contrary to his Nature: That it is not contrary to his Will, nor at all inconsistent with his Law and Justice, on the Foundation of Christ's Obedience and Sacrifice: That, therefore, they have no Reason to conclude,

that their Salvation is an impossible Thing, tho' their Guilt is great, and their Corruptions *strong* and *raging*. Again, you must comfort the Tempted. Shew such, how the People of God have been tempted, and those Effects which Temptations have sometimes produced in them: And that *no Temptation shall overtake them, but what is common to Men: That God will find a Way for their Escape, that they may be able to bear it*: That no Danger attends their Temptation, so long as they consider and oppose it as such: And that the prevalent Intercession of Christ will secure their Faith in the greater *Winnowing's* they may meet with from Satan, the Enemy of their Souls. *I have prayed for thee, that thy Faith fail not.*

Farther, you must comfort the Afflicted. *Affliction is not joyous, but grievous, tho' it yields the peaceable Fruits of Righteousness*, to the Saints under a divine Blessing. Believers are sometimes *weary and ready to faint in their Minds*, when pressing Difficulties and Trials are upon them: And, therefore, they have Need of a reviving Cordial to cheer their *drooping Spirits*. Shew them in this Circumstance, that *many are the Afflictions of the Righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all*: That they are Fruits of paternal Love, and not Effects of vindictive Wrath: That they are intended for their Advantage, and shall certainly terminate in their Good: For *all Things work together for Good to them who love God, and are the Called according to his Purpose.*

Moreover, you must comfort such as are in Distress, under Darkness and Desertion. Shew them, that the *Children of Light, sometimes walk in Darkness*, and have *no Light* of Comfort and Joy, for a Season: And that, therefore, it is no other than a Temptation to think, that, because at present they enjoy not the *Light of God's Countenance*, they are not the Objects of his Love. Encourage them to wait for the Lord, yea to wait *patiently* for him. Shew them, that the Lord *rests in Love*: And that, tho' his Dispensations towards them vary, no Change occurs to his Affection unto their Persons. I add, you must endeavor to comfort the Saints, who mourn under the heavy Weight of the Body of Sin. Sometimes they are tempted to think, that *their Spot is not the Spot of God's Children*, upon a View of the *Plague of their Hearts*: That surely there can't be *true Grace*, where there is so *much Corruption*. Shew such, that it is proper to a Principle of Grace to *discern the evil Nature* of Sin, to *loath* and *oppose* it, *as Sin*. And, that where Sin, as Sin, is opposed, and its Destruction desired and fought after, there it hath lost its Dominion, tho' it *swells, rages*, and ever so violently exerts itself: That tho' their Conflicts with their Lusts may *be sharp*, their Victory is *sure* in the End. Let them but continue fighting, and they will certainly be Conquerors. Once more, you must endeavor to comfort convinced, mourning Backsliders. Encourage and promote in them Sorrow for their Miscarriages; but labor to confirm their Faith, and renew their Joy, with all *Meekness* and Compassion to their distressed Souls, *considering yourself, left you also be tempted*. This is a very necessary Consideration for us all. Let the *best Man in the*

World be but tempted, and left to himself, and he will fall an *easy* Prey to the Temptation, *be it what it will*.

But permit me to observe to you, that it will not always be safe for you to attend to this Part of your Charge, *merely* in a *Common-Place Way*: You must carefully consider and observe the Nature of that Trouble which Men are under; whether it is *spiritual*, or *legal* only; whether it springs from a pressing Sense of Guilt and of its Demerit only, or whether it arises from a *spiritual* Principle in the Mind. If it doth, it will be attended with an Hatred of Sin in itself, and a strong Desire of Freedom from the Prevalence, Power, and Being of it. Where you cannot discover some genuine Acting's of this Principle, you must not apply those excellent Rules, which are prescribed in *casuistical* Writings, for comforting afflicted Consciences, for, if you do, you will not profit; but it may greatly prejudice the Souls of Men, and occasion them to think, that their Case is fare, when in Fact it is not so. And, on the other Hand, you must be very *cautious*, that you use no spiritually-mourning Soul with *Severity, Slight, and Neglect*; if you should, you will *make the Hearts of such sad, whom the Lord would not have made sad*. If you would be *as God's Mouth*, you *must separate the Precious from the Vile*. This Part of your Work

is attended with great Difficulty, and *much Skill* is required unto a proper Discharge of it. By a diligent Study of the Word of God, and a strict Observation of your own Heart, in Seasons of Temptation, Affliction, Trouble, and Darkness, you will be best qualified for comforting *Zion's Mourners*.

The *Book of Psalms* is a rich Treasury of spiritual Experience; and, therefore, I would advise you to study that Book closely. From thence you may learn, what Temptations, Troubles, and Distresses, sometimes attend the Saints; what Vicissitudes they pass under; what is the Matter of their Support; how they are relieved, encouraged, delivered, and filled with triumphant Joy, in the Issue. And, therefore, hereby you will become capable of administering Comfort to such as have a clear Title to Gospel- Encouragement, but, thro' a Variety of Causes, are most backward in receiving it. The Care of such will require your greatest Tenderness, and the Exercise of your utmost Skill, as a *Son of Consolation*, to give them Relief under their Distress.

2dly. You must *exhort*. Men in general you must exhort to shun the Practice of Sin, and to avoid all Occasions of it: And put them on the Practice of Duty. Exhort them to read the Scripture; and exhort them to Prayer, which is a Part of natural Religion, and a Duty incumbent on all Men. Exhort them to hear the Word of God preached; this is also their Duty: For the Gospel justly demands the Attention of every Man, how much soever it is neglected and despised by the Generality of Mankind thro' the Blindness and Prejudice of their Minds. Again, you must exhort the Saints to decline every evil Way and Work; to practice every Duty in every Relation and Capacity, Providence places them in. Be sure that you do this in an *evangelical*

Manner. Never content yourself, with Discourses of *bare* Morality. But shew from what Principle good Works spring: That they flow from Love, are performed in Faith: And that the Motives to them are God's Purposes of Mercy, the Acts of his Goodness; the Benefits which flow from that Origin, thro' the Mediation of Jesus Christ. You must shew for what Ends Duty is to be attended unto upon the Gospel-Plan: Not in order to Justification before God, and with a View to obtain Life by that; but for the Glory of God, and to shew our Gratitude to him for his Kindness to us, to manifest our Approbation of Holiness, and Abhorrence of Sin, and our willing Subjection to his Authority, and for the Honor and Credit of his Gospel, which is the Source of our Comfort, and the Foundation of all our Hopes of Salvation and Happiness.

Never be moved from this Part of your Charge by the Cavils of those, (should you meet with such) who have no Relish for any Thing but Doctrines. See to it, that you take the Apostle's Advice, and obey his Injunction, in this Matter. *These Things I will, that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good Works, for these Things are good and profitable to Men;* tho' some may put you upon neglecting one Part of this Advice, and others oppose you in attending to the other Part of it. And observe, that you must do this *with Long-Suffering and Doctrine*: That is to say, with *Gentleness, Meekness and Patience*. Moroseness becomes not a Minister of *the Gospel of Peace*, and an Ambassador of the *meek* and lowly Jesus. Not but that you may meet with some, whom you must *rebuke sharply*. If you engage in the Defense of Truth against a *sneering, insulting, and impertinent* Caviler, you will not lay yourself open to *just Censure*, if you treat his Manner of objecting with *Spirit and Smartness*, and call it by the Name it deserves, *viz. Impertinence*. Besides, you must do this with *Doctrine, i.e.* with Instruction in the glorious and important Truths of the Gospel. Hence you will see, that *close Study, indefatigable Labor*, and a *diligent* Observation of your own Heart, are necessary. What a Compass of Knowledge? What a Treasure of Experience? What Acquaintance with yourself? What an Understanding of the Nature of the *Devices of Satan*, and of the *serpentine* Windings of the *old Man*, are needful? And, in the Defense of the Gospel, what Ability of Discerning and Ripeners of Judgment are required, in order to shew the Weakness, Impertinence, and Fallacy of Objections against divine Truths?

Thus, my dear Brother, agreeably to your own Desire, I have let before you your Duty in a faithful Manner, according to that Light in and Apprehension which I have thereof. On the Consideration of these Heads of Advice, I am persuaded that you will say, *Who is sufficient for these Things?* But be not discouraged, neither at the Difficulties of the Work itself, nor the Opposition which you may meet with in it. *Endure Hardness, as a good Soldier of Jesus Christ*. May the Lord, who hath called you to this Service in his Church, assist you *to fight the good Fight, to keep the Faith!*

And, when (after Usefulness for many Years) you shall *have finished your Course*, may you clearly see, that you *shall receive a Crown of Righteousness, which God will give, not to you only, but unto all them who love his Appearing*, not as a *Reward of Debt*, but of *sovereign Grace!* Amen.

FOOTNOTES

The attentive Reader, I think, must discern, that the Apostle enjoins on *Titus* Preaching the several Doctrines, whereof some Hints have been before given; and, therefore, it certainly is the Duty of a Christian Minister to explain and inculcate those Principles, however unsuitable they may be unto the Taste of some Hearers. No Reasons, which by many are esteemed *prudential*, will be a sufficient Plea to justify him in a Neglect thereof. And evident it is, that those Truths, in their own Nature, are calculated to promote Holiness in all, who understand and relish the *Things themselves*.

The Doctrines of the *true Grace* of God have no *licentious* Tendency. Some Persons abusing those important Principles is no Objection to the Truths themselves, nor is it a *justifiable* Reason for a Minister's *Silence* about them, or a *slight* and *superficial* Manner of treating on them: They are what he *ought to affirm constantly*.

And, in order to prevent an Abuse of those Doctrines, it is a Duty equally incumbent on him to shew, that these Doctrines of divine Grace do not lessen, much less dissolve, our Obligation to Obedience: And, consequently, one necessary Branch of his Work is, to treat on Practical's, and to shew that the Gospel hath no greater Adversaries than those are, who, under a Pretense of Value for its momentous Doctrines, and of Pleasure in hearing them preached, can't bear with Exhortations to practice Duty. These are some of the *worst Enemies of the Cross of Christ*, and justly deserve the *most severe Reproof*, let them be *who or what they may*. Doctrines are not to be neglected or curtailed under the *specious* Pretense of promoting *practical* Religion: Nor must we decline to treat of Duties, and our Obligation to Obedience, under a *like* Pretense of Esteem for the Doctrines of the Grace of God. Tho' *the Gospel*

delivers us from the Covenant of Works, it leaves us under it as a Law. And, tho' Obedience is not required to the same Ends, yet still it is required, and it is to be enforced by *weightier* Motives, wherewith the evangelical Scheme furnishes us. Nor does that Preacher *make full Proof of his Ministry*, who neglects to practice either Part of this *apostolical Injunction*.