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PREACHING THE WORD, AN ANTIDOTE TO ERROR.*

II. TIMOTHY 4:1—4. *“I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and kingdom; preach the word; be instant, in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”*

This passage contains the charge of Paul to Timothy, and through him to every succeeding minister of the gospel. It is a charge of solemn import, in which, as ministers of the Lord Jesus, we are deeply concerned. It is my design to examine its bearing, with a view to our instruction in the duties and responsibilities of the christian ministry.

There are three points here distinctly presented, to which I shall invite your attention. I. A time is mentioned as future to that in which the apostle wrote, in which a particular state or condition of things would exist, and which would give it character and prominence. “For the time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine, &c.” II. The duty of the ministry in reference to that time, and the mode of accomplishing that duty. “Preach the word, &c.” III. The solemn motives which should operate to rouse the ministry to a faithful discharge of this duty. “I charge thee, &c.”

I. A time is mentioned, as future to that in which the Apostle wrote, in which a particular state or condition of things would exist, and which would give it character and prominence. This is indicated in verses 3d and 4th. *“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”*

It is on the prospective existence of this time, that the exhortation and motive urged in the 1st and 2d verses are based. This fact that a time was coming in which the state of things described would be found

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to exist, constitutes the reason why ministers should act as directed, in view of the responsibilities of the future judgment. The natural order, then, is first to notice the time referred to, in which would be found the particular state or condition of things here described.

The time referred to is distinguished by *opposition to the uncorrupted ministrations of the gospel*. As I am preaching to ministers, I may be allowed to criticize. I shall do it as sparingly as the proper elucidation of the subject will allow. The word "διδασκαλίας" which is translated "doctrine" in this 3d verse, signifies *instruction imparted*, and especially that instruction which involves principle, and which is distinguished by the name of *doctrine*. Its connected adjective signifies pure, unadulterated, uncorrupted. It is translated *sound*, in reference to a body which is well and free from disease. As the Apostle is addressing Timothy as a minister, in reference to his ministrations and their effects, it is evident that when he speaks of "sound doctrine," he must mean, *as it was preached by Timothy and others* who should succeed him in the ministry. It is believed, then, that we speak accurately, when we say that the time referred to, will be distinguished by opposition to the *uncorrupted ministrations of the gospel*, because it is to the sound doctrine of the gospel, *as exhibited by the christian ministry*, that men will manifest their opposition. This opposition will be manifested in several ways, and under different forms, though all closely connected.

1. "*They will not endure sound doctrine.*" The word "ανεξουρα" which is translated "endure," properly signifies in this place, to *admit or receive*. When, therefore, the doctrines of the gospel shall be presented by ministers in their pure, uncorrupted, scriptural character, they will not be received as the truth. Men will not admit them into their minds. They will evince their opposition, by the indulgence of a doubting, sceptical, objecting temper. They will resist them, as offensive to their taste, and refuse to receive them, as the accredited messages of heaven.

2. Another way in which they will manifest their opposition to the sound, wholesome ministrations of the gospel, will be, by the multiplication of teachers for the gratification of a depraved curiosity. "*After their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.*" In making their selection of ministers, they will not be influenced by a regard to their soundness in the faith, or the uncorrupted purity of their instructions, by their fidelity to their trust, or their capacity to do them good; but they will be influenced by their own depraved desires. "Their own lusts," will be the rule and measure of their conduct, in their selection of ministers, and their attendance on their ministrations,

And as wholesome instruction is not their object, but self-flattery and the gratification of curiosity, they will never be long satisfied with the ministrations of one man, especially, if he preaches the pure doctrines of the gospel, but will be constantly seeking something new, and endeavoring to gratify their rage for novelty, by the introduction of new ministers. And if they cannot introduce them into the midst of the society where they dwell and to which they belong, they will run after them, that they may have their "itching ears" tickled, and their depraved lusts gratified.

This disposition to multiply teachers; this rage for new men and new doctrines, seems to be the natural consequence of not admitting the truth into the mind. It is the second step in this course of defection. Let men

begin to doubt and object against sound ministrations, and refuse to admit their value and force, and they will, as a matter of course, cast about for others of a different description, which may better suit their taste, and interfere less with their prevailing lusts. And if you will take the trouble to look into the history of defection from the truth, as it has existed in different places, you will find this representation literally verified. A want of cordiality for sound ministerial instruction, a repugnance to the truth exhibited in its uncorrupted forms, has always led men, and churches, and congregations in which it existed, to seek ministers of a more compromising character, whose ministrations would tend rather to tickle the fancy, than enlighten the understanding and mend the heart. And such are found to be never satisfied with the ministrations of their own pastor, but have a restless craving to hear this, and the other one; and they never think that good is done or likely to be done, unless new and strange agents are introduced, and new measures, calculated to strike the imagination and rouse the animal feelings, put in requisition. The consequence is, that in this rage for new, and various, and diversified exhibitions, all regard for *the truth*, as embodied in the cardinal doctrines of the gospel, is lost. Their opposition to "sound doctrine," is, moreover, greatly increased by the vain philosophy, and flippant rhetoric, and noisy zeal exhibited by those on whose ministrations they attend, and who rarely fail to represent ministers of sound views and sober manner, as encased by prejudice, the subjects of a frigid orthodoxy, and the enemies of practical godliness and genuine revivals of religion. Hence, the way is prepared for a farther exhibition of their opposition, in the manner stated by the Apostle, by refusing to hear sound ministerial instruction.

3. "*And they shall turn away their ears from the truth.*" This evidently means that they shall refuse any longer to hear ministers who preach the gospel in its uncorrupted simplicity; whose ministrations embody sound principles and bring them to bear in all their heavenly force on the understanding and the heart, for purposes of practical godliness. This farther manifestation of opposition to the unadulterated ministrations of the gospel, is the natural effect of that which preceded. Men who make ministers the mere panders to their lusts; who attend upon their ministrations to gratify their taste for novelty; and who, in the accumulated variety, and heterogeneous mixture, and cob-web texture of their ministrations, find nothing to enlighten or confirm them in the faith of the gospel, will, from the very nature of the case, become more averse from the truth, and more fixed in their opposition to it. Especially, when it is considered that they had never admitted the truth into their hearts; that they have already begun to cavil and object; that their "heaps" of teachers, are ever alarming their fears about "heartless orthodoxy"—"creeds and confessions"—"metaphysical theology," with other things of a similar nature, it is not at all surprising, that they become entirely alienated from the truth, and finally refuse to attend upon the ministrations of men who preach it sound from the Bible. This is the natural course of things: I mean, natural to men who are under the influence of depraved lusts.

And what has been the history of this matter? What has been the course of those men, and churches, and congregations, which "after their own lusts have heaped to themselves teachers having itching ears?" Have they not been led ultimately to abandon a sound ministry, and withdraw from

those connections in which the truth was preached in its uncorrupted simplicity? Such, it is well known, has been the fact. While men who profess to be sound in the faith may, (inconsistently enough,) be seen mingling with the crowds which flock to hear the lectures of some popular heretic, you will rarely, if ever, see those who have thus departed from the truth, within the walls of a church, in which the doctrines of the protestant reformation are preached in their integrity and force. They turn away from the truth, being no longer able to bear its heavenly radiance. And thus the way is prepared for the highest and closing manifestation of their opposition to the truth, mentioned by the Apostle in the text.

4. They "*shall be turned unto fables.*" Perhaps, there is a primary reference to Jewish fables, against which the Apostle had previously warned Timothy. But, doubtless, all *vain and groundless doctrines*, which have no foundation in the word of God, are included; especially those doctrines which are not only unsupported by the word of God, but are light and trivial, partaking of the turgid vanity of those who fabricate and publish them. When men are entirely removed from the range and influence of a sound ministry, having been conducted there in the manner described, they are prepared to be the dupes of any imposture. Any thing in the name and garb of a preacher will be followed, and any thing and every thing which claims to be preaching, though it be the veriest figments of a disordered imagination, will be embraced as the richest treasures of heavenly wisdom.

There are examples enough in the history of the church to confirm this statement. Men who have suffered themselves to be carried away by artful, designing errorists and heresiarchs, and who have followed them wholly, have not generally stopped with the adoption of ordinary errors. They have gone from bad to worse, till they have been prepared for the adoption of any thing, however unscriptural or fabulous. The most foolish and irrational reveries have been accepted in the place of the purest and soundest doctrines of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Truth has been lost or buried amidst the accumulated novelties which have filled the mind, and the wildest absurdities have been accredited and received as the messages of heaven!

Such are the different forms under which opposition to the sound ministrations of the gospel will manifest itself in the time to which the Apostle here refers. And this opposition to the uncorrupted truths of the Bible, as published by the ministers of the Lord Jesus, under one or other, or all these forms, is that by which this time will be eminently distinguished.

II. In connection with the time which will thus be characterized by opposition to sound doctrine, the Apostle has informed us of the duty of the ministry in reference to it, and the mode of accomplishing that duty. "*Preach the word; be instant, in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.*"

"*Preach the word.*"—By "*the word*" here is meant the gospel in its peculiar and distinguishing doctrines; the same as designated by "*sound doctrine*," and "*the truth*," in the subsequent verses, so far as regards the substantive and scriptural character of that truth. It is their duty publicly and officially to proclaim and inculcate the truth as it is contained in the holy scriptures. Salvation through the atoning blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, with all the associated doctrines of the gospel, must be distinctly presented and urged on the attention of men, by the ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Preaching the gospel is the grand instrumentality which God has ordained to prevent the influx of error, or, if it already exists in the church, to prevent its spread. Is a time of defection and opposition to the truth foreseen or apprehended? Then, "preach the word," as the best preventive to such encroachments. Has error found its way into the church? Still "preach the word," as the surest way to counteract its progress and hinder its wider circulation. In this way, the ignorant will be instructed, the wavering will be confirmed, men who have never reflected will be made to think, those without principles will acquire them, an array of scriptural truth and argument will be thrown into the field, the consciences of men will become enlightened, souls will be converted, revivals will be produced by the effusions of the Holy Ghost in connection with the labors of Christ's servants, and thus, a strong barrier, to the successful advances of error, be erected. Hence, the solemn charge of Paul to Timothy, in view of the period which he describes, "preach the word!"

But how is this to be done? This is a question of great importance. Men may preach the word, and yet not preach it in the mode which God has prescribed; and thus, the objects to be attained, be defeated. Hence, much of duty lies in the mode of doing things, and in few things more than in preaching the gospel. On this subject, the Apostle has given us instructions, in this immediate connection.

1. His first direction is, "*be instant in season, out of season.*" In times of prospective or real defection from the truth, a leading inquiry is, when? how often shall we preach, to meet the demands of the occasion? Shall it be on the Sabbath only, or also on other days of the week? Only when opportunity offers, and men invite? Or shall we seek opportunity, and proffer our labors for the benefit of the souls of men?

The language of the apostolic injunction, evidently does not comport with the casual and sluggish discharge of the duty of preaching. It is *στηθί*, *stand upon* your duty; be close up to your work, standing as it were, upon it, and leaning over it. Be thus "*instant in season, out of season.*" Make it your constant business to preach the gospel; not at fixed times or stated periods only, but at all suitable times, when you can find opportunity; not according to the taste and desire of men, but according to the urgency of their necessities, and the magnitude of the interests involved.

It is, doubtless, not intended, by the apostle, that men should be regardless of prudence, in the midst of their zeal. There may be such a thing as presenting truth at unsuitable times. Hence, Christ tells his disciples, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." But, while prudence is to be exercised in relation to such cases, ministers must not be regulated by the calculations or rules of worldly wisdom on this subject. The less ministers preach and communicate on the subject of religion, the more agreeable it is to the taste of multitudes, both in and out of the church. Indeed, we have heard of churches which have desired to stipulate with their ministers for only *one* sermon a week, and which are quite willing to dispense with meetings for prayer, catechetical instruction, and every thing of this kind. Ministers, however, must not yield to such desires, nor adopt such rules; but as often as they can, however unreasonable it may be deemed by the world, they must present their

Master's message, seeking to obtain possession of the sinner's heart, and close it against those destructive seeds of error, which are ruinous to the interests of the soul.

2. "*Reprove, rebuke, exhort.*" These different terms are probably intended to describe the different modes of presenting the truth in our ministrations. The original word translated "reprove," signifies "to convince, to prove irrefragably to any one, to convict." The force of the direction is, that in preaching, ministers should make it a leading point to enlighten the understanding and satisfy the mind of the truth of the gospel, by intelligent exhibitions of its principles, and the evidence on which it rests. Thus they should seek to produce conviction. This is the first point to be accomplished. And this should be done before resort be had to rebuke or exhortation. First, enlighten and convince; then rebuke and exhort. You cannot drive men to the acceptance of the gospel by severe denunciations, nor draw them by mild persuasions, until you have produced in their minds enlightened convictions of its truth by rational evidence.

This method, is important to be observed. Ministers always depart from it, with loss to the cause of truth. They may thunder their rebukes, or urge their exhortations, if no ground of conviction be presented, little good will be effected. The sinner may be alarmed at, he knows not what: or his desires may be drawn forth after something to which he is exhorted: but if he has no enlightened conviction of the nature and value of the objects of fear and desire, the whole will soon pass away without any beneficial result. When, therefore, we hear ministers pouring forth their rebukes and exhortations, before they have taken any steps to enlighten the minds of their hearers in the knowledge of the doctrines and duties involved, we consider it about as wise, as for an artisan to urge an apprentice to do that which he never learned to do, and which he has never been convinced he ought to do, and then to rebuke him for not accomplishing it.

But allowing that men might, by the force of exhortation and rebuke, be brought over to the side of Christ, without any intelligent views in relation to the principles and grounds of their faith, would they be likely to stand fast in times of defection, and against the encroachments of error? Or, would they not be liable to be "tossed about by every wind of doctrine," and carried away by every errorist who invaded the purity of the church? All experience proves, that this description of converts, who have been brought into the church under ministrations of this character, have ever furnished the easiest and most abundant prey to those who have sought to seduce men from the simplicity of the gospel. While on the other hand, it has been comparatively rare, that those who have entered the church under the culture of enlightened instruction, have, to any great extent, been made the subjects of the seductive arts of wily declaimers, and the enemies of the truth. Hence, the great importance of directing our ministrations so as to ensure enlightened convictions of the truth, in order to its proper reception and maintenance against its adversaries.

Nor, is it simply by public preaching from the pulpit, that ministers are required to wield the truth. There are various other methods which they may employ, according to their appropriate talents, the circumstances in which they are placed, or the demands of the time in which they live. By written exhibitions of the doctrines of the gospel in books, or essays, or tracts, or in such other forms as peculiar emergencies may require for the

purpose of giving prominence to the truth, and bearing testimony against error, ministers may comply with the requisition of the apostle in the text. By uniting in a *public testimony* in favor of the truth, and in opposition to error, they may do much to silence gainsayers, and recommend the sound doctrines of the gospel to the acceptance of their fellow-men. Much, also, may be done by private instruction in the family circle and the catechetical meeting, to store the mind with sound doctrine, and lead sinners to Christ for salvation. All these various methods of presenting the truth, may and ought to be employed in the discharge of the high duties belonging to our office, and here pressed upon our attention by apostolical authority.

Some, understand these directions, "reprove, rebuke, exhort," as referring to the exercise of discipline, and so interpret them. I have taken a different view of the subject. It may not be improper, indeed, to include the various parts of discipline. Discipline, we know, is an important means of arresting the progress of error; and the apostle may have intended to include this, as a part of the instrumentality to be employed for the preservation of the purity of the church of Christ. "*An heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject,*" is a judicial injunction, intended for ministerial direction in the removal of error from the church, by forms of disciplinary process. And where ministers, in connection with preaching the word in the manner prescribed, are faithful in the application of discipline to its appropriate object, they will not fail to erect a strong barrier to the encroachments of error, and prevent its spread to the injury and subversion of the truth. This they ought to do.

3. "*With all long-suffering and doctrine.*" Ministers in preaching the word, must exercise much "long-suffering." The term includes the ideas of *patience* and *fortitude*. It means the patient endurance of whatever evils arise in the discharge of their duty. There is much of opposition and reproach, and want of success, and of every thing calculated to produce discouragement, connected with the faithful preaching of the gospel. Ministers are often tempted to despondency and fretfulness, and discontent, and passion. To these, they must not yield, but patiently endure every evil to which they may be exposed, in the circumstances of their condition. They must calmly bear with christian fortitude whatever trials, fidelity to the cause of truth and duty may impose.

At the same time, they must not allow patience to degenerate into indolence. Though they must be passive under trials, they must not be inactive in reference to the duties which stand connected with them. For while they are required to do their duty with "all long-suffering," they must do it also with "doctrine," that is, as the word here means, "giving instruction." They must continue to preach, constantly imparting the knowledge of sound doctrine for the security and salvation of those to whom they are sent. Ministers, when they see error approaching, adversaries rising up, and dangers threatening, must meet the crisis with calm and holy fortitude. But this is not enough. They must connect with this, the active communication of divine truth, instructing the ignorant, encouraging the feeble-minded, counselling the wavering, directing the energies of the strong, testifying against error, and, in the exercise of a *faithful and efficient discipline*, seeking to have the church purged from all her impurities. In short, they must combine the greatest activity in duty, with the most unruffled meekness of disposition, and the most unbroken energy of soul.

The spirit with which ministerial effort is characterized, is of great importance. Men may preach sound doctrine, and be laborious in its incubation, if they do not evince the right spirit, they will fail of accomplishing much. If, when their labors appear unproductive of profit to the souls of men, and men oppose and resist their efforts to do good, they become angry and petulant, and seek, by violence and harshness, to carry their object, disappointment will be the certain result. Men will not lay aside their sins, to gratify a haughty or angry temper. Ministers must be patient. They must bear long and be kind, seeking by patient fortitude to surmount every obstacle, and win sinners to the standard of the divine Redeemer.

These remarks apply with equal force to the exercise of discipline. It requires much "long-suffering and doctrine," to give it its proper effect, and make it answer the end of its institution. Indeed, the whole of the work of the ministers of Christ, should be characterized by a right spirit, and right efforts. They should not cease, in the exercise of patience and fortitude, to instruct men in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and way of salvation through his blood, and the regenerating and sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost, that they may thus be brought into his kingdom and made partakers of eternal life. To the fulfilment of these high duties of the ministry, under the circumstances referred to in the text, ministers have strong and pressing inducements. This brings us to consider,

III. The solemn motives presented in the text to rouse the ministry to the faithful discharge of the duties enjoined. "*I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and his kingdom.*" There are two things which the apostle here urges as motives to ministerial fidelity, under the circumstances presented.

1. The first is, that they act under the immediate notice of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. "*I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*" We are always in the presence of God. His eye is ever upon us. He sees us in the retirements of our study, in our public ministrations in the pulpit, in our intercourse with our flocks, and in our deportment before the world. He observes us, when we think, and plan, and labor, and pray in relation to the souls of those committed to our care. He sees us when we meet in Presbytery, when we are together in Synod, and when engaged in responsible and solemn deliberation on the floor of the General Assembly. And, O, when we neglect our duty: when we cease to preach the word in the manner enjoined in the text, he sees us too, with a vigilance equally strict, and a judgment equally unerring.

This presence of God and the Savior, should be deeply felt by us, wherever we go, and whatever we do. But especially, in our official characters, as ministers of the everlasting gospel, and when engaged in the fulfilment of the duties growing out of our commission, we should have a profound sense of the presence of the omniscient God. And without doubt, if we always had an abiding sense of the presence of God and the Savior when we engage in our official duties, it would tend much to give purity and vigor, and devotional power to our ministrations. We would not then dare to trifle with sacred things, nor with the sacredness of our official vocation. But we would always prepare for our duty, and engage in it with a grave and solemn sense of its importance to our own souls, and the souls of those to whom we are sent. Thus, we sometimes feel bound to peculiar

efforts, and our minds are filled with respect and awe, when called to preach in the presence of our superiors in wisdom and age. But to preach "*before God and the Lord Jesus Christ,*" how solemn and overpowering the thought! Here, truly it becomes us to tax every power of thought, and to call into requisition all the spiritual energies of the soul. This, assuredly is a motive which should be felt in all its overwhelming force, urging us to increased fidelity and diligence in discharging the sacred functions of our office.

2. The other motive presented by the apostle, to the faithful discharge of the duties enjoined, is, that we shall have to answer to the Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming to wind up his kingdom. "*Who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.*" The judgment day is called "his kingdom," because the whole of the affairs of the Redeemer's Kingdom, will be settled, and finally, and for ever arranged on that day.

And while the Lord Jesus will judge the quick and dead on that occasion, we who have enjoyed official stations, as heralds of the cross here in his church, must also give an account. We must give an account of ourselves. But what is still more solemn, we must give an account for the souls committed to our trust. For the manner in which we have preached the word; for our diligence; our pressing earnestness; our care to make the people understand the truth; for our urgent application of motives, in reproving, rebuking and exhorting sinners: for our patience and fortitude, and laborious exhibition of the doctrines and principles of the gospel: for all these, we must give an account.

My dear brethren, this is a very solemn consideration, which ought to have a constraining influence upon us. To be assured, that our poor, defective, sin-stained labors, shall all be brought into review before the judgment seat of Christ; and that, if we shall be found to have been faithless and negligent, it shall be published to the assembled universe, and we ourselves condemned to everlasting woe, is enough to rouse every power of our souls, and lead to unceasing diligence, and prayerful and believing efforts in seeking to win souls to Christ. Surely in view of this, every one of us is ready to adopt the pious resolution, that, by the grace of God, we will "preach the word: be instant in season, out of season: reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine."

Having thus illustrated the points in the text, I shall close with a few practical reflections. 1. The hearers of the gospel may be admonished against indulging a rage for novelty, which is ever in search of new doctrines, and new measures, and new ministers. 'Tis the bane of the church, and of sound and growing piety. Few things have done more injury to the cause of evangelical religion than "itching ears," which are never contented with the plain, scriptural exhibitions of divine truth, by sound and enlightened ministers, but are always craving the novelties and varieties of an ever-changing ministry. It is an unfavorable symptom, as it indicates a state of mind adverse to the truth, and prepared for the adoption of any error. Indeed, persons are in a sure way to become the victims of a fabulous theology, when they yield to this thirst for new teachers, who will entertain them with new speculations, and introduce them to new and strange doctrines, with which the church is not familiar. Those, then, who value the truth in its intrinsic excellence, and practical influence, should beware

of yielding to this demand for new and ever-varying exhibitions of divine things. Let them rather "desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby," and that, strengthened through the agency of the truth, they may be prepared to sustain the honor and interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom in the world.

2. Let the ministers of the gospel learn how to meet and repel the advances of error—by laborious and multiplied, persevering and patient preaching of the gospel, and the discharge of their various official functions. This is that to which *we* are called. The state of things which the apostle has described prospectively, seems to have arrived. The time *has* come when "men will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts, have heaped to themselves teachers, having itching ears." Nor has this state of things *now* for the first time made its appearance, but it has long existed, and is apparently increasing—and if fidelity in our ministerial functions is required by the apostle, as necessary to prevent the influx of error, it is equally, if not more necessary to prevent its spread, and effect its removal.

Do we, then, mourn that errors prevail, and that teachers who disseminate these errors, are multiplied? Let us seek the correction of these evils, by the diligent and faithful preaching of the gospel, and the equitable administration of discipline. Let us exhibit the truth in its lovely forms and just proportions. Let us reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with the spirit of our divine Master. In a word, let us preach more, and better, than we have ever done; be more faithful in dealing plainly and affectionately with our hearers about their souls, warning them against errors, directing them in the ways of righteousness, and by much patient fortitude, laboring till they be brought to know and love the truth as it is in Jesus, for the salvation of their souls. In this way, we may do much for the suppression and prevention of error in general, and for the restoration and continuance of a sound and healthful sentiment in the church, to whose glory we stand pledged.

3. Finally, that we may be stimulated to this course, let us remember, that for the manner in which we comply with these requisitions, we must give an account to the Savior whose commission we bear. Let us keep that account constantly in view. O, it will be a solemn reckoning. It will be for the life of souls. In the prospect of this solemn retribution, let us all be roused to greater activity and fidelity in our Master's service. The time is short. The day of reckoning is near. Opportunities for labor, will soon be over. Let us then, work, while it is called to-day. Let us give ourselves wholly to this blessed work, so that when the Master comes, we may receive the approving sentence, "Well done good and faithful servants—enter into the joys of your Lord!"