



The inaugural address of Edward Wigglesworth at Hollis Professor of Divinity

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The Inaugural Address of Edward Wigglesworth as First Hollis Professor of Divinity

Leo M. Kaiser

THE EMINENT AMERICAN HISTORIAN, Samuel Eliot Morison of Harvard, has produced the most stimulating account¹ of the establishment at the Cambridge school of the Hollis Professorship of Divinity in 1722, and of the appointment of Edward Wigglesworth² as its first incumbent. Those interested in what measures — some of them perhaps a little short of wholly laudable ideals of procedure — were taken at the College to have the Chair filled by Wigglesworth will do well to turn to Morison's sprightly pages. Here we are concerned rather in presenting in edited form, along with a contemporary translation, the Latin *oratio* delivered by Wigglesworth at the inauguration ceremonies of 24 October 1722,³ before an audience that included President John Leverett,⁴ the Council, Overseers, Students, "and a Numerous Congregation of Pious and Learned Gentlemen of the Neighbouring Towns."⁵ Governor Samuel Shute, though addressed at the beginning of the *oratio*, was absent due to the inclement weather.

The Latin text of Wigglesworth's remarks is preserved in two manu-

¹ *Three Centuries of Harvard* (Cambridge, 1936), pp. 66-69. See also Clifford K. Shipton, *Sibley's Harvard Graduates: Biographical Sketches of Those Who Attended Harvard College* (Boston, 1937), V, 548-549.

² c. 1693-1765; A. B. Harvard, 1710.

³ The date, "October 23, 1722," given by Morison (p. 67) is not supported by manuscript evidence.

⁴ 1662-1724; A. B. Harvard, 1680. President of Harvard from 1708 to 1724. The Latin speech by Leverett which opened the ceremonies has been edited by the present writer for a forthcoming issue of *Manuscripta*. On other Latin orations by Leverett, see Leo M. Kaiser, "Apta et Concinna Oratio: The 1703 Commencement Address of John Leverett," *Manuscripta*, XIX (1975), 159-170; "Prae Gaudio, Prae Luctu: The First Commencement Address of President John Leverett," *HARVARD LIBRARY BULLETIN*, XXIV (1976), 381-394.

⁵ Leverett's manuscript Book Relating to College Affairs in the Harvard Archives.

script copies: the earlier ⁶ forming part of Leverett's manuscript Book Relating to College Affairs in the Harvard University Archives; the later, with an elegant English translation in the same hand on facing pages, in the Ebenezer Parkman ⁷ manuscripts at the American Antiquarian Society. It is the opinion, however, of William L. Joyce, Curator of Manuscripts at the American Antiquarian Society, one in which I concur, that the handwriting of the later Latin text and its translation is probably not that of Ebenezer Parkman.

Though its scribe is as yet unidentified, it is essentially the later (or "corrected") Latin text that appears below, the variant readings of the Leverett text being listed in the footnotes.

For all its being a somewhat sober effort compared to the sparkling Latin commencement addresses of a Urian Oakes ⁸ or of Leverett himself, most readers will echo the comment of famed diarist Samuel Sewall who was in the audience that "Mr. Wigglesworth made a good Oration in Latin." ⁹ Besides the expected Biblical quotations and paraphrases ¹⁰ are occasional classical reminiscences that knowledgeable listeners would have approved, even though they noted elsewhere some rare or post-classical words. Moreover, what seem to be personal flashes of eloquence occur, as e.g., in these four passages: "flumine liberalitatis indesinenter exundante"; "trepidat animus meus et movetur e loco suo"; "quam diu in hac statione perstitero"; "opus meae fortassis imbecillitati convenientius." ¹¹

⁶ From various footnotes below on the Latin text the reader may discern how various changes made by Leverett in his manuscript Book were accepted by the writer of the other Latin copy.

⁷ The Reverend Ebenezer Parkman (1703-1782; A. B. Harvard, 1721) is remembered today largely for the diary he kept. The fate of Wigglesworth's autograph copy of his *oratio* is not presently known.

⁸ See G. L. Kittredge and Samuel E. Morison, "Urian Oakes' Salutatory Oration: Commencement, 1677," *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, XXXI (1935), 405-436; Leo M. Kaiser, "The *Oratio Quinta* of Urian Oakes, Harvard 1678," *Humanistica Lovaniensia*, XIX (1970), 486-508; "The Unpublished *Oratio Secunda* of Urian Oakes, Harvard, 1675," *Humanistica Lovaniensia*, XXI (1972), 385-412; "Tercentenary of an Oration: The 1672 Commencement Address of Urian Oakes," *HARVARD LIBRARY BULLETIN*, XXI (1973), 75-87.

⁹ M. Halsey Thomas, ed., *The Diary of Samuel Sewall, 1674-1729* (New York, 1973), II, 997.

¹⁰ Some of Wigglesworth's quotations we may well have failed to recognize.

¹¹ When Wigglesworth had finished speaking Leverett added the following benediction, hitherto unpublished:

Nunc quid restat quin Numen iterum veneremur caeleste, illumque Patrem miserationum obnixè supplicemus ut quicquid honoris, quicquid muneris tibi, domine

The English translation is a mature and capable piece of writing, gracefully handling the Latin with happy and independent phrasing while conveying its exact sense unbound by any slavish construing. It may fall within the realm of likelihood that Wigglesworth himself was responsible for it.

The essence of Wigglesworth's remarks is that all truth conducing to a good life is either found in or deducible from Holy Scripture; "unprofitable Speculations" therefore are to be avoided. All this imposes a heavy obligation on the minister of God so far as both his flock in general and young minds in particular are concerned.

Whatever specific reactions Wigglesworth provoked by his inaugural oration in the minds of his colleagues, it seems clear that he did not prejudice his case with Harvard students, with whom he remained a prime favorite and a considerable theological influence as he "led the way," to use Morison's vivid phrasing, "out of the lush but fearsome jungles of Calvinism, into the thin, clear light of Unitarianism."

The Latin text below has been edited from photocopies of the manuscripts. Spellings, but not necessarily paragraphing, capitalization, or punctuation, are unchanged. (In the English translation both spellings and capitalization are left unchanged.) Scribal errors, omissions, corrections, changes, and other notabilia of the manuscripts are listed in the footnotes. Numbers in the text in parentheses are page numbers of the manuscript at the American Antiquarian Society, those in brackets the page numbers of the manuscript at Harvard.

To the American Antiquarian Society and to Harvard University thanks are herewith expressed for permission to publish the texts, and for providing photocopies and the many kindly services that so greatly facilitate the labors of the researcher. To the Newberry Library I am again indebted for various courtesies. The Committee on Research of Loyola University of Chicago granted a leave of absence which permitted beginning this study.¹²

reverende, divina providentia conceditur tibi et imponitur, id totum ex sua gratia superabundanti cedat in ipsius gloriam, in fundatoris coronam, in tui solamen, in academicorum documentum et Academiae emolumentum, quodque etiam diffuse toti Reipublicae et Ecclesiae Nov-Anglicanae feliciter et fauste successurum.

Quas petitiones ut ordines, amplius, et urgeas, in te devolvitur, Reverende Frater Magister Colman.

Benjamin Colman acquiesced, and thereupon the first and second-last stanzas of the 122 Psalm were sung by way of conclusion.

¹² In the notes to the text that follow, the symbols *A* and *H* are used to indicate

Oratio Habita in Aula Academica Cantabrigiensi

(2)

1722

[238]

A Reverendo Domino Edvardo Wigglesworth¹³

Illustrissime Domine Gubernator,¹⁴ vosque honorandi admodum ac reverendi Curatores,¹⁵ Praeses, et Senatores academici.¹⁶

Si mihi animae desiderium meae permissum et a vobis congenito pudori¹⁷ indultum fuisset, non alias tenuissem partes in solennitate hodierna quam munus mihi concreditum cum silentio et humilitate accipiendi, et cum morigero cordis proposito summopere studendi ut officia deinceps a me expectanda fideliter saltem perficiantur. Quandoquidem vero poposcerunt¹⁸ illi¹⁹ quibus omne obsequium et alacrem obedientiam debeo, ut nonnihil dicam hoc tempore, obtemperabo profecto illorum voluntatibus dicendo quae pro tempore et occasione sufficere videantur; indulgebo tamen indoli hominis minime loquacis hoc faciendo quam paucissimis.

De conventus hujusce causa lacta ne verbulo²⁰ quidem opus [239] est; jam enim et oculis et auribus²¹ illam²² percepistis. Neque magis necesse est ut indicem cuiquam propterea debemus gratias; etenim²³ nulli nostrum adeo obtusa gestant pectora²⁴ ut viri nomen et famam nesciant.

Non autem gratitudo mere humana, multo minus Christiana sine pietas ut haec praeteream, inobservato amabili et non vulgari verae²⁵ charitatis Christianae exemplo a liberali nostro benefactore, Domino²⁶ Thoma Hollis,²⁷ piis omnibus exhibito in tot tantisque conatibus (4) egregiis ad promovendum doctrinae et religionis in Academia nostra incrementum.

Exemplum quidem tale quale, si devincientes et miras spectemus circum-

the readings of the manuscript at the American Antiquarian Society and at Harvard respectively.

¹³ The title thus in *A. H* reads simply *Oratio Inauguralis ab ipso Professore prolata fuit verbis sequentibus.*

¹⁴ Samuel Shute (1662-1742), Governor from 1716 to 1722.

¹⁵ Inspectores *H.*

¹⁶ academici *A.*

¹⁷ pudore *A.*

¹⁸ proposcerunt *A.*

¹⁹ illi above line in *H.*

²⁰ A word appearing first about 970 A. D.; see R. E. Latham, *Revised Medieval Latin Word List* (London, 1965).

²¹ auribus et oculis *H.*

²² illam above line in *H.*

²³ etenim *H.*

²⁴ Cf. Vergil, *Aeneid* I.567; non obtusa adeo gestamus pectora Poeni.

²⁵ A cancelled *verae* appears in *H* both before *charitatis* and after (above) it.

²⁶ dignissimo (for Domino) *H.*

²⁷ Thomas Hollis (1659-1731), a London merchant and, though a Baptist, one of Harvard's chief benefactors.

stantias, rarissime forsitan orbis universus²⁸ aspexit alterum: virum scilicet e terra longinqua, cui locus noster et nomen vix nota fuere, cum primum audisset reverentiam Dei in hoc loco esse, et charitatem nostram in eos, qui (quod ad leviora legis) a nobis dissentiunt, minus esse constrictam quam in plurimis²⁹ regionibus aliis; multa quoque commoda, quibus exterarum universitates gaudent, nobis hactenus deesse; talem, inquam, virum (licet ipsum haud sentientem nobiscum de nonnullis, quae saepius causam praebuerunt multae simultati Antichristianae in Christiana ecclesia; ³⁰ nihilominus), cum supradicta audivisset,³¹ adjicere animum ad procurandum nobis prosperitatem indefessa attentione, prudentia numeris omnibus absoluta,³² et flumine liberalitatis³³ indesinenter³⁴ exundante.³⁵ Haec certe sinceram et ingentes postulant a nobis gratias, caelesti imprimis Patri, qui indiderit res tales animo servi sui, deinde benefactori in terris, cujus benignitate³⁶ haec tam recte et feliciter gesta sunt.

Det Deus servo suo nomen melius quam filiorum aut filiarum: nomen perpetuum,³⁷ quod non excindetur.³⁸ Faxit Deus ut memoria³⁹ ejus ad seros usque nepotes⁴⁰ reddatur clara⁴¹ et illustris ex incessanti⁴² benedictione divina super theologicas praesertim exercitationes,⁴³ quas ut fundaret, inter tot alia benefacta, tam maturam, magnificam et prudentem curam adhibuit. Magnum sane argumentum pii et caelestis animi affectus quod hoc primatiae servo Domini curae fuit ut animaret et promoveret studia(6) nostra in ea quae secundum pietatem est doctrina,⁴⁴ cum qua⁴⁵ si comparetur, utilissima et admiratione dignissima doctrina aut⁴⁶ eru[240]ditio mere humana velut nihil est, imo minor nihilo et⁴⁷ vanitate vanissima.

²⁸ Cf. Pliny, *Natural History* III, Prolog: terrarum orbis universus in tres dividitur partes.

²⁹ pluribus corrected to plurimis *H*.

³⁰ Originally ecclesia Christiana in *A*, then altered.

³¹ Originally audisset in *H*, then altered.

³² Cf. Pliny, *Letters* IX.38: liber numeris omnibus absolutus.

³³ Originally liberali in *H*, then altered.

³⁴ indesinenter *H*.

³⁵ Cf. Pliny, *Letters* II.4: velut ex fonte liberalitas nostra decurrit.

³⁶ *H*. reads benignitate et providentia.

³⁷ perpetuum *H*.

³⁸ Cf. *Josiah* 7.9: delebunt nomen nostrum de terra; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* XV.876: nomenque erit indelebile nostrum; Silius Italicus VII.643-44: tam clarum excidere nomen / Brutum exoptantem.

³⁹ Cf. *Ecclesiastes* 24.28: Memoria mea in generationes saeculorum: *Wisdom* 8.13: Et memoriam aeternam his, qui post me futuri sunt, relinquam.

⁴⁰ Cf. Vergil, *Georgics* II.521: seris factura nepotibus umbram.

⁴¹ clara *H*.

⁴² incessante *H*.

⁴³ Originally exercitationibus in *H*, then altered.

⁴⁴ Cf. I *Timothy* 6.3: ei quae secundum pietatem est doctrinae.

⁴⁵ ad quam (for cum qua) in *H*.

⁴⁶ aut above line in *A*.

⁴⁷ et not found in *A*.

Et quidem quid est ullius momenti aut ponderis ⁴⁸ intra captum rationis humanae divinitus non adjutae, quod non magis perspicue et plane ⁴⁹ docemur in verbo Dei, cum nullum sit, uti recte notat clarissimus Amesius,⁵⁰ in oeconomis, ethicis, politicis aut juridicis catholicae ⁵¹ veritatis praeceptum ad bene vivendum spectans quod non est in sacris literis vel expresse revelatum, vel legitima consequentia ab illis deducendum.

Non igitur sine causa fidenter affirmat Apostolus totam Scripturam divinitus esse inspiratam, et utilem ad doctrinam, ad redargutionem, ad correctionem, ad disciplinam in justitia,⁵² ut perfectus sit homo Dei, ad omne opus bonum perfecte instructus.⁵³

Hoc consilium, hic scopus est doctrinae Servatoris nostri Dei, non ut ⁵⁴ inanibus et inutilibus contemplationibus animos detineat,⁵⁵ sed ut ⁵⁶ perfecte nos edoceat ⁵⁷ sublimes istas ⁵⁸ de Deo rebusque divinis veritates, quibus accendantur corda nostra debitis in Deum affectibus, animique propensi fiant ad praxin alacrem illorum officiorum omnium, quae tam efficacia naturali quam ex gratuita Dei promissione conducunt tum ad nostri tum ad proximi felicitatem in hoc seculo, et ad nos evehendos ad gloriam, honorem, et immortalitatem in seculo venturo.

Quam ⁵⁹ gloriosum igitur, sed quantopere verendum quoque et arduum est illorum opus, quibus dispensatio evangelii servatoris (8) nostri credita est! Et quas oportet esse dotes et naturae et artis, quam sollicitudinem, diligentiam, fidelitatem viri a quo expectabitur ut alios instituat ad opus ministerii, ut evangelizent inpervestigabiles ⁶⁰opes Christi! ⁶¹

Profunditates ⁶² Dei sunt inexplorabiles. Pietatis mysteria permagna sunt.⁶³

⁴⁸ ullius momenti aut ponderis not found in *H*. Cf. Cicero, *In Vatiniuum* 9: id est maximi momenti et ponderis.

⁴⁹ plene *A*. Cf. Cicero, *De Finibus* III.19: plane . . . et perspicue.

⁵⁰ William Ames (1576-1633), English Puritan divine, a master in theological controversy.

⁵¹ catholicae to spectans written above line in *H*.

⁵² justitiam *A*.

⁵³ Cf. II *Timothy* 3. 16-17: Omnis scriptura divinitus inspirata utilis est ad docendum, ad arguendum, ad corripiendum, ad erudiendum in iustitia, ut perfectus sit homo Dei, ad omne opus bonum instructus.

⁵⁴ ut above line in *H*.

⁵⁵ Originally detinens in *H*, then altered.

⁵⁶ ut above line in *H*.

⁵⁷ Originally edocens in *H*, then altered.

⁵⁸ illas *H*.

⁵⁹ In this part of his oration Wigglesworth seems to have in mind the sentiments of *Titus* 1.5-16.

⁶⁰ A word first appearing about 1623; see R. E. Latham, *Revised Medieval Latin Word List* (London, 1965).

⁶¹ Cf. *Ephesians* 3.8: data est gratia haec, in gentibus evangelizare investigabiles divitias Christi.

⁶² Cf. I *Corinthians* 2.10: spiritus enim omnia scrutatur, etiam profunda Dei.

⁶³ Cf. I *Timothy* 3.16: magnum est pietatis sacramentum.

Quot sunt in Scripturis difficilia intellectu, quae indocti parumque stabiles detorquent⁶⁴ suo ipsorum exitio? Qui dubitant dirigendi sunt, quomodo conscientiam habeant semper sine offensa. Contradicentes porro sana doctrina convincendi, et vaniloquorum et⁶⁵ mentium seductorum ora obturanda.⁶⁶

Sed ad haec quis idoneus ipse? ⁶⁷ Multo ⁶⁸ magis, quis talis magister Israelis, ut possit aliorum mentes formare et ad haec tam perfecte ⁶⁹ instruere, ut eos ex omni parte probatos Deo et hominibus sistat, operarios qui non erubescant? ⁷⁰ Et quis potest accendere aliorum ⁷¹ mentes tanto zelo Dei tantaque commiseratione animarum, quanta necesse est illis, qui suscepturi sunt inspectionem ecclesiae, quam suo proprio sanguine Christus acquisivit?

[241] Haec vero omnia et multo plura, quae ⁷² satis temporis non suppetit ad ⁷³ dicendum, sunt muneris ⁷⁴ ad me delegati providentia Dei, corda vestra pro suo beneplacito in me, quantumvis impari et immerenti, convertentis. Quam ob causam trepidat animus ⁷⁵ meus et movetur ⁷⁶ e loco suo. Sublatis igitur in caelum oculis,⁷⁷ flecto genua mea ad Patrem Domini nostri Iesu Christi, qui ex ore infantium et lactantium ⁷⁸ perficit sibi laudem,⁷⁹ qui destituto viribus robur copiose suppeditat;⁸⁰ qui dixit, si cui vestrum deest sapientia, petat a Deo et dabitur ei,⁸¹ ut det mihi intelligentiam in omnibus, retegens oculos meos ut intuear mirabilia ex lege et evangelio, meque (10) implens agnitione voluntatis suae cum omni sapientia et intelligentia spirituali,⁸² ut det mihi linguam eruditissimam,⁸³ suppeditans vires ad veritatis sermonem secundum recte, et ad praebendum in doctrina integritatem, gravitatem, sermonem sanum, qui damnari

⁶⁴ Cf. Columella III.10.2: prave detorta et inveterata opinio rusticorum.

⁶⁵ ac H.

⁶⁶ Cf. Titus 1.9-11: ut potens sit exhortari in doctrina sana, et eos qui contradicunt, arguere. Sunt enim multi etiam inobedientes, vaniloqui et seductores . . . , quos oportet redargui.

⁶⁷ Cf. II Corinthians 2.16: ad haec quis tam idoneus?

⁶⁸ Et multo H.

⁶⁹ perfecti H.

⁷⁰ Cf. II Timothy 2.15: operarium inconfusibilem.

⁷¹ mentes aliorum H.

⁷² quae to dicendum not rendered in the English translation.

⁷³ ad not found in A.

⁷⁴ Originally munus in H, then altered.

⁷⁵ Cf. Horace, Odes II.19.5: mens trepidat metu.

⁷⁶ subsillit H. Cf. Isaias 7.2: et commotum est cor eius.

⁷⁷ Cf. Psalmus 25.15: oculi mei semper ad Dominum.

⁷⁸ lactantium A.

⁷⁹ Cf. Psalmus 8.2: ex ore infantium et lactantium perfecisti laudem.

⁸⁰ Cf. Isaias 40.29: qui dat lasso virtutem et his qui non sunt fortitudinem et robur multiplicat.

⁸¹ Cf. James 1.5: si quis autem vestrum indiget sapientia, postulet a Deo, qui dat omnibus affluentem, et non impropert, et dabitur ei.

⁸² Cf. Colossians 1.9: ut impleamini agnitione voluntatis eius, in omni sapientia et intellectu spiritali.

⁸³ Cf. Isaias 50.4: Dominus dedit mihi linguam eruditam.

non possit;⁸⁴ denique ut corroboret me et corpore et animo ad praestationem totius muneris mihi mandati,⁸⁵ adeo ut ipse glorificetur, et juventus mihi commissa proficiat in dies sapientia, doctrina, et timore Domini,⁸⁶ et ut⁸⁷ benefactor noster munificentissimus fruatur gaudio et consolatione videndi finem piae et benevolentissimae institutionis suae adimpletum.

Nunc autem quid superest nisi ut vos, honorandi Maecenates patresque reverendi, ardentissime obtester et obsecrem per Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum et per charitatem juventutis ejus⁸⁸ ministerio dicatae, ut mecum certetis vestris pro me apud⁸⁹ Deum precibus; neve urgeatis hoc opus,⁹⁰ primo saltem incepto, celerius quam viriculae ferant meae; sed cogitetis non tantum magnitudinem sed et novitatem operis inter nos, juventutem quoque ejus qui suscipit, et quod tantum⁹¹ non decennium⁹² aetatae suae contrivit in alienissimis a theologia studiis; ideoque permittetis ut sperem omnem indulgentiam, humanitatem et tolerantiam, quas istae rationes flagitant.

Ad me denique quid attinet, quam diu in hac statione persitero — perstabo autem, volente Deo, donec aut vos substitueritis hominem huic operi et oneri minus imparem, aut ego ad aliud quoddam opus, meae fortassis imbecillitati convenientius avocatus fuero — de me ipso non ausim polliceri quicquam praeter fidelitatem et, quatenus permiserit⁹³ valetudo studii nimis impatiens, attentionem⁹⁴ animi⁹⁵ sedulam sincerisque conatus veritatem, pacem, et sanctimoniam promovendi.

May it please Your Excellency, and the rest of the honourable and reverend Overseers, together with the reverend, the President and Fellows of Harvard College.

If I might have been allowed the Desires of my Heart, and my naturall Bashfulness might have been indulged, my only Part in this Day's Solemnity would have been to receive the Trust committed to me with Silence and Humility and a dutifull and full purpose of Heart faithfully to endeavour the Performance of the Services hereafter expected from me. But since 'tis required of me to

⁸⁴ Cf. *Titus* 2.7-8: in doctrina integritatem, gravitatem, verbum sanum inreprehensibilem.

⁸⁵ Cf. Pliny, *Letters* V.14.2: mandatum mihi officium.

⁸⁶ Cf. *Luke* 2.52: Et Iesus proficiebat sapientia et aetate et gratia.

⁸⁷ ut above line in *H*.

⁸⁸ illius *H*.

⁸⁹ apud written above a cancelled, illegible word in *H*.

⁹⁰ Cf. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* IV.389-390: proles / urgent opus.

⁹¹ In *H* tantum non decennium written above cancelled plusquam septennium.

⁹² decannium *A*.

⁹³ permissit *H*.

⁹⁴ Cf. Cicero, *De Oratore* II.150: reliqua sunt in cura, attentione animi, cogitatione.

⁹⁵ animi above line in *H*.

say Something on this Occasion by those to whom I owe all possible Duty and chearfull Obedience, I shall therefore endeavour to comply with their Pleasure by saying so much as may seem needfull; and yet I shall indulge my own Inclination by doing it in as few Words as may be.

There is no Need that I should say Anything of the happy Occasion of our being assembled here this Day, for you have already both seen and heard it. Nor is it more necessary that I should go about to inform you to whom we are beholden for it. I suppose none of us are such Strangers in Jerusalem as not to know the Man and Something of the Character he deserves. And yet mere human Gratitude, and then be sure Christian Piety, won't suffer me to pass these Things without observing the amiable and truly extraordinary Example of true Christian Charity which our generous Benefactor, the worthy Mr. Thomas Hollis, has given to the World (3) in the great and good Things he has done to promote the Interests of Learning and Religion in our Academy.

Such an Example as — considering its indearing and surprizing Circumstances — perhaps the World has seldom ever seen before: that a Man from a far Country, to whom our Place and Name were hardly known, as soon as he had heard that the Fear of God was in this Place, and that our Charity and Good Will to Men differing from us in the lesser Matters of the Law, was not altogether so contracted as it is in too many other Places, and that many Advantages enjoyed by foreign Universities were still wanting to us, that such a Person, I say, tho' differing from us himself in some Points, which have been too often the unhappy Occasions of much Unchristian Animosity in the Christian Church, should yet set himself only upon hearing those things to seek our Welfare with unreserved Diligence, consummate Prudence, and a flowing Stream of Liberality. This is what surely calls upon us to render most hearty Thanks in the first Place to our Heavenly Father who hath inclined the Heart of his Servant to these Things, and then to our earthly Benefactor by whose Kindness such worthy Deeds are done unto us!

May God give unto his Servant a Name better than of Sons and of Daughters, even an everlasting Name that shall not be cut off. And may his Memory be rendred dear and honourable to the latest Posterity by the continual Blessing of Heaven upon the theological Exercises in particular which, among his many other good Deeds, he has taken such an early and generous and prudent Care to found. A great Argument indeed of a pious and heavenly Disposition that the Servant of God has made it his first Care to encourage and advantage our Studies in the Doctrine which is according to Godliness!

(5) In Comparison of which the most usefull and admired mere humane knowledge and Learning is as Nothing, yea less than Nothing and Vanity.

And indeed what is there of any considerable Value within the Reach of unassisted human Learning and Reason which is not more clearly and fully taught us in the Word of God? For there is no Precept of catholick Truth conducing to a good Life, delivered either in Oeconomics, Ethicks, Politicks, or Law but what is either expressly revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures or by genuine Consequence deducible from them. Well then might the Apostle tell

us that the Scriptures are profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness that the Man of God might be perfect, thoroly furnished unto all good Works. This is the Business of the Doctrine of God our Saviour, not to amuse our Heads with unprofitable Speculations, but to instruct us thoroly in those divine Truths which may kindle suitable Affections in our Souls unto him, and may dispose our Hearts to the chearfull Practice of all those Duties which both by their own naturall Efficacy and by the gracious Promise of God conduce to the Happiness both of ourselves and others here, and raise us to Glory, Honour, and Immortality hereafter.

How glorious then, but withall how great and difficult, is the Work of them to whom a Dispensation of the Gospel of our Saviour is committed! And what ought to be the Accomplishments, the Sollicitude, the Diligence and the Fidelity of him from whom it is expected that he train up others for the Work of the Ministry, (7) to preach the unsearchable Riches of Christ! The Things of God are very deep; great are the Mysteries of Godliness! Not a few Things in the Scripture are hard to be understood, and pressed by the Unlearned and Unstable to their own Destruction. The Doubtfull are to be directed how to keep Consciences void of Offence, and Gainsaying must be convinced by sound Doctrine, and the Mouths of unruly vain Talkers and Deceivers must be stopped. But who is sufficient for these Things himself? And much more, who such a Master in Israel as to be able to form the Minds of Others and instruct them so thoroly in these Things as to make them in all Points Workmen that need not be ashamed? And who is able to fire their Hearts with such a Zeal for God and Compassion for the Souls of Men as becomes those who are to take the Oversight of the Church which Christ hath purchased with his own Blood?

Now all this and much more is the Work which I am called to by the Providence of God, who has been pleased to turn your Hearts upon me notwithstanding my Unworthiness and Insufficiency; at which my Heart trembleth and is moved out of its Place. My Eyes are therefore unto God in the Heavens who ordaineth to himself Praise out of the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings, and increaseth Might to them that have no Strength, and hath said if any Man lack Wisdom, let him ask of God and it shall be given him, that he would give me Understanding in all Things, opening mine Eyes to behold the wondrous Things of his Law and Gospel, and filling me with the Knowledge of his Will in all Wisdom and spiritual Understanding; that he would give me the Tongue of the Learned, enabling me to divide the Word of Truth aright, in Doctrine shewing Uncorruptness, Gravity, Sincerity, and sound Speech which cannot be condemned; and that he would strengthen me both in Body and Mind to discharge the whole Trust reposed in me so as that he himself may be glorified, and that Youth committed to my Instruction may increase daily in Wisdom and Learning and the Fear of the Lord, and our generous Benefactor may have the Pleasure and Satisfaction of seeing the Design of his pious and charitable Institution answered.

And now what remains but that I earnestly intreat and beseech you, my

honourable Patrons and reverend Fathers, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake and for the Love of the Youth devoted to his Service, to strive together with me in your Prayers to God for me, and not to press upon me at my first Entrance on this Work harder than my Strength will bear, but to consider not only the Greatness but the Novelty of the Work among us, the Youth of him who undertakes it, and that he hath spent almost ten Years of the little Time he has lived in the World in Studies very foreign to Divinity. You will therefore give me Leave to hope for all that Indulgence, Humanity, and Forbearance which these Considerations plead for.

As for myself, so long as I continue in this Station — and that will be, God willing, either till you have chosen you a more sufficient Person, or till Providence shall remove me to some other Work more suitable to my own Weakness — I can only promise Faithfulness and diligent Application as far as my Health will (11) allow, and sincere Endeavours to promote Peace, Truth, and Holiness.

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