

AN ADDRESS TO YOUNG PREACHERS

By Elder Gregg M. Thompson

Dear Brethren:

Will you take kindly, in the close of this book, a short address from an old servant, who has been for sixty years in the war, has passed through many severe and hard-fought battles, and is now standing upon the verge of the grave, ready to drop his armor, receive his discharge, and go home to rest from his labors?

You are the called of God, to stand upon the walls of Zion, and watch for the good of God's people. Your life is one of labor, toil, and exposure to the fiery darts of the enemy. Your responsibilities are great, and a lack of faithfulness in the discharge of duty on your part, may bring great distress and confusion among Zion's citizens. When Moses delivered his last address to the children of Israel, he warned them of the dangers that would surround them when they entered the Promised Land; that the country was filled with idolatrous worshipers, and by them they would be led away from their God, and bring upon themselves his divine wrath. One little deviation from the law of the Lord, that might be thought very small and unimportant, brought upon them his wrath and correcting rod. The word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; and you will not escape if you neglect the word spoken by the Lord, and confirmed unto us by them that heard him. Every thing not commanded by our Lord, and taught and practiced by his apostles, is forbidden, and classed with idolatry. It leads our minds away from Christ, and changes the order he has established in his kingdom, which is diverse from all other kingdoms, and is not to be numbered with the nations of the earth.

An entire separation from all human and worldly institutions and a strict observance of the commands of Christ, have been the infallible mark of his church in all ages of the world.

Worldly churches may practice the ordinances of the gospel as commanded; they may teach a great deal of truth, but let them withdraw from their worldly institutions and their humanly devised systems, and they are dissolved and killed at once. The very thing that maintains the distinct visibility and identity of Christ's church, and insures her final triumph over all her enemies, is the certain destruction of all false churches. I therefore charge you before God, to watch this point, and guard it well. False churches will hate and abuse you, and call you hard names, but let none of these things move you; a faithful discharge of duty, and the comfort and peace of Zion are worth more to you than life, and all the honors earth can give.

God has never promised you worldly honors, or wealth, or a smooth sea to sail over; your reward here is found in suffering persecutions, and bearing reproaches with his poor and afflicted people; for, "*They that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*" Your reward is in heaven, and your crown is waiting for you when you shall have fought your last battle. Be the servant of the church; not for filthy lucre, but because you love her, and are willing to suffer for her, and with her. Be careful to feed the lambs and sheep, to nurse the little ones, to strengthen the weak knees, encourage the fearful hearted, and speak comfortable things to God's people. I shall never meet you in this world; I shall soon drop into the grave, and be forgotten by the world; but my last words to you are.

Be careful to maintain the purity of the church, and her entire separation from all the institutions of men. If men tempt you to the least deviation from the path marked out in the gospel, by the syren song of "No danger;" be not deceived; it leads to destruction. Again, I say, Remember the distinct mark that has in all ages identified Christ's church, and preserve it; and at the end of your warfare and stewardship here, your Lord and Master will say, "*Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into*

the joy of thy Lord." God bless you! and so preserve you that you may keep your garments unspotted from the world. Amen.

--G. M. THOMPSON