

Savoy Declaration of Faith: XIV. Of Saving Faith¹

1. The grace of Faith, whereby the elect are inabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the Ministry of the Word, by which also, and by the administration of the Seals, and Prayer, and other means, it is increased and strengthened.²

Various matters stand out in this statement on Saving Faith from the Savoy Declaration. Saving faith is the work of the Spirit of Christ in the hearts of those who believe, but note that they are “enabled” to believe. This keeps clear the need for the sinner, when under conviction and having their eyes opened by the Spirit, to respond personally. “Till the Spirit worke new grace, wee have no power of ourselves, being unto the worke of conversion mere patients; though in the worke, when the Spirit hath changed and enolymed (illuminated) us, wee are co-workers with the Spirit. Before conversion we resist: In conversion the Spirit inclineth our wills, and of unwilling, makes them willing to be converted, and to repent; God not

¹ A DECLARATION of the FAITH and ORDER Owned and practiced in the Congregational Churches in ENGLAND; Agreed upon and consented unto By their ELDERS and MESSENGERS in Their Meeting at the SAVOY, Octob. 12. 1658. (London: Printed for D.L., 1659), p. 10.

² The statement in the Westminster Confession of Faith is very similar, but note the difference at the end of the paragraph. “The grace of Faith, whereby the elect are inabled to beleeve to the saving of their souls, is the worke of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the Ministry of the word, y which also, and by the administration of the Sacraments and Prayer, it is increased and strengthened.” *The Confession of Faith, and the Larger and Shorter Catechisme, First agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster...* (London, 1651), p. 30. Retained is the original wording in the second edition of the Westminster Confession. In the 2nd edition copy of the Confession from where this citation is taken, there is included a first edition title page from 1646. It is **not** called the Westminster Confession of Faith in the first edition. The title is, *England and Scotlands Covenant with Their God...*

working in us as in rocks or stones, but as in reasonable creatures.”³ Faith is worked in the sinner, but the sinner does respond and act responsibly to the Spirit’s in-working in the soul.

Spurgeon had this view as well. The Spirit works through the preaching of the Word, but also works in the hearer of the preaching in such a way that they are enabled to respond to the preaching.

Now, when you have to go and preach to sinners, God sends some preparatory work before you, he is sure to do so. When people come into the place of worship to hear the gospel, if a man be in earnest in preaching it, God works upon them to make them ready before they come; and something they thought of on the road, or some sickness they have had, or a death-bed scene they have witnessed, or some movement of conscience, awakened perhaps before they get into the building, renders them ready to receive the gospel of the grace of God.⁴

It is then that the hearer responds, and the sinner will only respond when the Spirit is working in his heart. God works in such a way that He is preparing them even before they come to the service, but they are still rational creatures and they must respond as such. “The great thing which we need in preaching is the power of the Holy Ghost, without which our words will be utterly lost.”⁵ The Spirit must work both *through* the one in the pulpit and *in* the one in the pew.

³ Elnathan Park, *The Grovnds of Divinitie* (London: Printed for Samvel Man, 1636), p. 382.

⁴ Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (Pasadena, Texas: Pilgrim Publications, 1998), p. 259.

⁵ Thomas Murphy, *Pastoral Theology* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1877), p. 158.

The Savoy instructs us that “the administration of the seals, and prayer, and other means,”⁶ are elements that increase and strengthen the initial work of the Spirit’s ordinary work in saving. These “improving” elements do not set aside the need for the initial work of the Spirit in the heart. They help the work along after it has taken hold. They increase and strengthen it, but the act of being “enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ.” Thus, while credence is given to the need for the sinner to respond to the operation of the Spirit’s work, priority is given to the work of the Spirit in bringing the elect to faith. The use of means never regenerates. Regeneration is always a work of the Spirit.

Of course, we have left out the phrase we intend to look into on a deeper level, “and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word.”⁷ The Savoy views preaching as *central* to the working of the Spirit. It is out of vogue to say that these days. The majority within the Evangelical and Reformed traditions today advocate a multiplicity of ministries and ways of “reaching” the lost. Would it not help if we had coffee and donuts to take into the service with you? What about a drama on the life of Jesus? Perhaps a professional choir to sing “approved” anthems? Maybe if we get those comfortable pew cushions? Dancing bears? It is true that there are some

⁶ This is the central distinction between Westminster and Savoy in this paragraph. Savoy says “seals” and does not specifically say “Sacraments,” as the Westminster Confession of Faith. In addition the Savoy adds this phrase, “and other means,” which leaves things a little more open than Westminster. In this place Westminster has a tighter statement than Savoy, and Savoy gives added room for interpretation.

⁷ The earliest reference that I have found to this phrase is in William Perkins, “The next is, that the Ministerie of the word, is an ordinarie meanes, wherein God doth offer, and apply Christ with all his benefites to the hearers, as if hee called them by their names, *Peter, John, Cornelius, Beleeue in Christ, and thou shalt be saued.*” (William Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of the Cases of Conscience...* (London: Printed by Iohn Legatt, 1617), p. 15.

things that we can do to bring the lost into the building and seek to gain an audience. These things are permissible when they do not violate Scripture. However, the Savoy is rather clear that the ordinary way that the “elect are enabled to believe” is a “work of the Spirit of Christ” using “the ministry of the Word.” The use of means never supplants or unseats the work of the Spirit. The primacy in our ministry must be our seeking, even pleading with the Spirit to work through the means which He has established.

The implications of this upon the preacher are far reaching. The encouragements are even greater for those who minister the Word of God every Lord’s Day. The Savoy is saying that that the Spirit’s normal mode of operation is through preaching. It does not deny that the Spirit can work when and how the Spirit wishes, but the normal way of the Spirit working is through the faithful preaching of God’s Holy Word.⁸ This speaks both of our duty in faithful preaching, but also of the great encouragement to faithful preachers that it is not our feeble efforts that are effectual. It is the Spirit. Christopher Love says, “That whoever God intends effectually to call, it is God’s ordinary way to call them by the Ministry of his

⁸ “Surely, then it must in like manner bee deliuered, the vvord of God is iust, it is vnpartiall, it respects no mans person; and it must be deliuered, it must iustly and vvnpartially bee dispensed, the Minister of the Word, in preaching and dispensing the vvord of God to the people, must looke that he deale iustly, that he promise good to those that are good, and threaten ill to those that are wicked; hee must not make sad the hearts of those whom God hath not made sad, nor soothe vp any in their sinnes.” Edvvard Elton, *The Complaint of a Sanctified Sinner Answered: or An Explanation of the seuenth Chapter of the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Romans* (London: Printed by G. Eld, 1622). P. 260.

word.”⁹ The burden of success is greatly lifted off the preacher’s shoulders here. The Spirit works through the preacher, not because of him. He works in the hearts of the hearers and without His assistance all preaching is in vain.

Ephesians 3:8: “*To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ.*”¹⁰

In Paul’s words here there are several things to consider. He calls himself the least of all saints. It is a common theme with Paul. He says something similar in I Corinthians 15:9, “For I am the least of the apostles, who am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.” He calls himself the foremost of sinners in I Timothy 1:15. In II Corinthians 12:11 he refers to himself as, “inferior to the most eminent apostles, even though I am a nobody.” In spite of this Paul says here that grace was given to him to preach. The Puritan Paul Bayne makes the observation “that the almighty power of God accompanieth the gift of the ministry in two regards. 1. In regard of the person preaching. 2. In regard to the person hearing.”¹¹

It is not the effectiveness of the person speaking that accomplishes the desired task of reaching the heart. The qualification for effective ministry is that the

⁹ Christopher Love, *A Treatise of Effectual Calling and Election* (London: Printed for John Rothwell, 1653), p. 52.

¹⁰ “Should not ministers be made welcome that come to men on such golden messages? In Christ are riches of justification, Tit. 2:14; sanctification, Phil. 4:12, 13; consolation, 2 Cor. 12:9; glorification, 1 Pet. 1:5.” John Trapp, *A Commentary on the New Testament* (London: Richard D. Dickinson, 1877), p. 593.

¹¹ Paul Bayne, *An Entire Commentary vpon the Whole Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Ephesians...* (London: Printed for M.F., 1643), p. 366-367

almighty power of God must accompany the work of the ministry in both the person preaching and the person hearing. Bayne goes onto say that we are to “challenge our selves for light esteeme and want of thankfulness for this great favour,” and to “blesse God that hath done us this favour.”¹² Every preacher knows himself all too well and knows his unworthiness. So he commends himself to the Lord who has promised to work through the proclamation of the Word unto His glory. It is the Lord who makes our labors effectual. It is not the labor or laborer, but the God who blesses the work. Bayne maintains the importance of thanking God for this mercy.

Thomas Brooks, also commenting on Ephesians 3:8, talks about the honorable nature of this ministry, “Their work is honourable. Their whole work is about soules, about winning soules to Christ, and about building soules up in Christ, and to these two heads, the main work of the ministry may be reduced.”¹³ What is honorable about the ministry? It is that the Living God uses His ministers to accomplish His work. His work is about saving souls, and building them up in the faith. The minister, as the minister is blessed by the Spirit and ministers through God’s Word, is God’s primary instrument in this task. God works through His pastors to win unto Himself and strengthen those who are His elect. “They are fellow-labourers with God. They are Co-workers with God in the salvation of sinners. And

¹² *ibid*, p. 368

¹³ Thomas Brooks, *The Unsearchable Riches of Christ* (London: Printed by Joseph Caryl, 1655), p. 316.

this is a mighty honour, to be a fellow-labourer with God, to be a co-worker with God, *1 Cor. 3:9. For we are labourers together with God.*"¹⁴

Thus the minister is to preach Christ and look for the Spirit to bless his labors.¹⁵ We preach Christ and Him crucified for sin. The Savoy would have the reader understand that God works through this means in the hearts of fellow sinners. It is God's ordinary way of working. Paul says, Eph. 3:8, that God gives grace to preach. The preacher wholly relies on this. He looks for God to bless as he looks to be faithful to Christ. Bayne argues that this passage teaches, "what especially the Ministers of the Gospell must beat upon, Christ Jesus our Lord, to reveal Christ; this is the principall nayle (mainly) upon which a minister is to beate, this is the Alpha and Omega which sinfull men must heare."¹⁶ Ministers of the Gospel exalt Christ, Christ alone, and look for the Spirit to bless in the hearts of those who hear. It is the ordinary way in which the Spirit works.

The preacher makes much of Christ and longs to see the Spirit move through him and in his audience. However, not all preaching always leads to the conversion of the sinner. Sometimes the ears of the hearers remain plugged and they do not hear the Word. This is not necessarily ineffectual preaching. The riches of Christ are not always opened up to the unregenerate. There is a common grace effect of proclamation. When Christ is truly proclaimed the truth still goes out. The Spirit can

¹⁴ *idem*

¹⁵ "If the Holy Ghost, in the Scriptures, dwells upon Christ as the great subject of revelation, surely his ministers may well do the same...The more we have the Spirit's influence the more we shall do just as he did – take of the things of Christ and show them plainly to men." Murphy, *Pastoral Theology* p. 174-175.

¹⁶ Bayne, p. 370

still be using the pulpit ministry to bind sin and proclaim righteousness. In addition, when the Gospel is proclaimed and the sinner does not respond it only adds to his condemnation. He has heard the Word of truth and rejected it. It is sometimes true that the effectual nature of proclamation is toward condemnation rather than repentance. “But alas, how are they corrupted and inverted by sin! The concupiscible appetite greedily fastens upon the creature, not upon God; and the irascible appetite is turned against holiness, not sin.”¹⁷ This also can be the effect of preaching and it is the Spirit confirming the soul in its own properties of rebellion against the Living God, even while free grace is offered.

Luke 24:49: “*And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father unto you;*¹⁸ *but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with the power from on high.*”

In this passage the Holy Spirit is said to be the “promise,” sent by Christ.¹⁹ In his work, *Religious Affections*, Jonathan Edwards wrote “the Spirit is often spoken of as the sum of the blessings promised in the gospel.”²⁰ It is the Spirit who brings the

¹⁷ John Flavel, *A Treatise on the Soul of Man* (London: Printed for T. Tegg, 1824), p. 66.

¹⁸ The Westminster Annotations identify this promise as, “The gifts and graces of the holy Ghost, which I promised you.” *Annotations Upon all the Books of the Old and New Testaments* (London: Printed by John Legatt and John Raworth, 1645).

¹⁹ “Wherein also consists the accomplishment and summary of all the promise of grace, Acts 1:4.” John Doidati, *Pious Annotations vpon the Holy Bible* (London: Printed for Nicolas Fussell, 1643), p. 59, on Luke 24:49.

²⁰ Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections* (London: Printed for the booksellers, 1796), p. 167. Edwards also says, “The Spirit of God is the great promise of the Father, Luke xxiv:49.” In his *Miscellaneous Observations*, and speaking of Christ, Edwards refers to this verse as one of the “great events for the benefit of his church that he would bring to pass.” In Edwards’ work, *Humble Attempt* he also refers to this verse saying, “Therefore the Holy Spirit is so often called the *Spirit of promise*, and emphatically, *the promise, the promise of the Father, &c.* (Jonathan Edwards, *The*

first of Spiritual life into the soul. Christ has purchased the Spirit, from the Father, for the elect, with His own blood. The Father sends the Son, who is the Savior, and the Son sends forth what the Father has given to Him as purchased for His work. The Holy Spirit is what is purchased. This is what the Son has left for the church. He has given us His Spirit. All the blessings that the saints enjoy, which include all aspects of the application of the sinners redemption, come through the Spirit.

The Disciples of Christ were the first preachers of the early church, but they were not to go out unequipped, as witnessed at Pentecost in Acts 2. Jesus tells them to wait for “power from on high.” The power is the “Helper” in John 14:16, 17. He is the “Spirit of truth,” who Jesus promised to send, who fell upon them at Pentecost. . The disciples, who walked with Christ in the flesh, were not to go out without the Spirit, and ministers of our time may not either. “The Spirit is promised to work *Grace* and Holiness , in all on whom he is bestowed.”²¹ Without the Spirit there is no ministry and all preaching is in vain. However, when the Spirit blesses even jumbled ramblings can be effectual. He can use the most pathetic preaching and make it effective. Ministers need power from on high. Preaching in a proper manner requires no small attention to the task, but it cannot effectually bring the message of salvation if the Spirit does not bless.

However, let us note that Jesus tells the disciples to “stay” in Jerusalem until they are equipped. The power they needed was not in themselves. It had to come

Works of Jonathan Edwards, (Carlisle: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1992), p. 6, 469, 288.

²¹ John Owen, *A Discourse of the Work of the Holy Spirit in Prayer*. (London: Printed for Nathanael Ponder, 1682), p. 16.

from above. They were unequipped for the task without the Spirit and the minister of Christ is also. The disciples had been with Jesus three years, yet they were unequipped to go without help. Education and experience are inadequate to equip a preacher. It is the Spirit alone who blesses our efforts to the souls of His elect. Does a minister desire to win souls to Christ? If so, then, he must pray for “power from on high” to come down and bless his preaching. He must resolutely believe that the ordinary operation of the Spirit is to work through the ministry of the Word, but if he does not have the Spirit working in him, his preaching will not be effectual unto souls. It is as he has the “power from on high,” that he will/can be used through his preaching.

Wicked Ministers:

In his work on *Effectual Calling*, Christopher Love interacts with a question from a man struggling to reconcile the work of the Spirit in his heart with the fact that the minister under whom he had come to faith was now “grown loose in his practice.”²² The individual wrote, “I was never wrought upon, neither by seeing godly people among whom I lived, and observing their example, nor was I wrought upon by reading good books; but I was first wrought upon by hearing such a minister, that I now see run into error; or a minister that is grown loose in his practice (happily in these present times gone to joyne with the enemy against the Kingdom,) and become a wicked and vile liver; and the Minister being bad that

²² Love, *Effectual Calling*, p. 116-118. All the quotes in this section are from these pages.

wrought upon me, makes me question, whether the work be not an unfound and bad work also.”

Love’s response explains how a true work of the Spirit is of the Spirit and the vessel is but the means of accomplishing the work. He says, “The badnesse of the Minister is no just ground of making us suspect our calling. For then we should never be sure of our call. A man may be sure of his own conversion, though a man may not be sure of the conversion, of him by whose means he was called.” He further says, “God may use Ministers that are wicked themselves to convert others.” Using the analogy of a cook, Love describes an unregenerate minister’s experience. A cook can “dress” the dish and “furnish a large and stately Table, yet of all these dishes himself hardly taste one; so Ministers, they may dresse many a dish for their hearers, yet they not lick their fingers, or taste the spiritual food themselves.”

He also gives the example of Doctor Pembleton, a famous minister in the days of Queen Mary, who in his days “converted many,” but turned out, in the end “to be a Papist.” Love says this is not the ordinary way in which God usually works, but “God may use a wicked man to be a means to convert soules.” His reasoning is simple, “the efficacy of the Word doth not depend upon the man, but upon Jesus Christ, and Christ may make use of whom he pleaseth.” Godly ministers today must affirm this. Efficacy in preaching does not depend upon anything but the Spirit and the Spirit can use those who are pretenders to work grace into the heart of one through another who has not this grace himself. The Spirit can and does work as the Spirit pleases. He can use dishonorable vessels, but it is not the vessel that matters in the

great transaction. It is the Spirit's work that applies the redemption purchased by Christ to the individual. The means are secondary.

Why Preaching?

The simple answer, as to why God has chosen preaching as the means, is that God has ordained it to be the manner in which souls are converted. II Cor. 5:20 tells ministers that they are ambassadors for Christ. Paul says that "we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers," Acts 13:32. In II Tim. 4:2, Timothy is given the charge to, "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction." Jesus preaches throughout the Gospels. Preaching is given as the example that leads to the conversion of souls throughout the book of Acts. It was the example of the Apostles to plead with people to come to Christ. It has been the example of faithful ministers ever since. "I beseech you brethren in the bowels of Iesus Christ, make much of the Worde which is preached among you: for it is euen your life."²³

Consider the example of the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8. An angel tells Philip to go to a certain road in verse 26. Then Philip sees the eunuch approaching and in verse 29 "the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go up and join this chariot.'" Neither the angel or the Spirit does the preaching to the eunuch. It is Philip that speaks to him. "An angel

²³ Lewys Thomas, *Demegoriai. Certaine Lectures vpon Sundry portions of Scripture* (London: Printed by I. R., 1600), no pagination. Citation comes from the 3rd to the last page of the first sermon.

is sent to direct Philip, but Philip is sent to discover Christ.”²⁴ This is the means by which God has purposed to work. In the past He may have used visions, dreams, and miracles, and these are still certainly at His disposal to use today, but the ordinary means that God uses to communicate His truth is preaching. “And to the preaching of the Gospel only our Saviour promised his *presence to the end of the world, Mat. 28:20.*”²⁵

The minister is to preach the Word of Truth. He is to preach Christ and his messages should be filled with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is easy to think that the message has become stale and that “they have all heard it before 100 times,” but this cannot be the minister’s mindset. It is a lie to believe that. We must have one thing to mind when we walk into the pulpit: Jesus Christ. “By nature man thinks it is what he does that is of chief importance. When that idea is carried into the pulpit the preacher aims to be popular in order to gain an acceptance for his message. The right response, he thinks, will depend on his hearers not being offended. The Bible presents the truth very differently. It announces what God has done; and describes men with God as ‘fools’, ‘ignorant’, and deservedly under wrath.”²⁶

The minister is to strive for conversions in his preaching. “The end of preaching is not a good sermon, but a holy heart.”²⁷ He is not striving to hear how much people enjoyed his sermon. He does not go into the pulpit with the hopes that

²⁴ Stephen Charnock, *The Works of, Vol. 2* (London: Printed by Am Maxwell, and R. Roberts, 1684), p. 239.

²⁵ idem

²⁶ Iain H. Murray, *Lloyd-Jones: Messenger of Grace* (East Peoria, IL: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2008), p. 12.

²⁷ Murphy, *Pastoral Theology*, p. 200

people will stay with his outline or admire his rhetoric. His first priority is not even to challenge doctrinal errors or instruct. He is to preach Christ and Christ crucified (I Cor. 1:23). Some other matters may come into sermons in the course of ministry, but every sermon must present the Lord Jesus Christ, dead for sin, and risen for our Justification. A minister is to be earnest, winsome, and zealous as he speaks of the sinner's need for Christ. "He who does not supremely aim to bring sinners into a state of actual friendship with God, falls short of the design of the sacred office."²⁸

Ursinus gives a helpful answer to the question of "Why Preaching?". Under the heading, "What the Ministry of the Church is," he answers, "The Ministry of the Church is a function by God ordained of teaching Gods word, and administering his Sacraments, according to his divine ordinance. The parts then of the Ministry of the Church are two: 1. To preach Gods word. 2. Rightly to administer the Sacraments."²⁹ The first end of church ministry is the glory of God, but the second Ursinus identifies as, "That it may be an instrument, whereby to convert men unto God."³⁰ This is the thrust of the Savoy statement concerning the ministry of the Word and the work of

²⁸ John Angell James, *An Earnest Ministry* (Carlisle: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1993), p. 22.

²⁹ Zacharias Ursinus, *The Summe of Christian Religion* (London: Printed by James Young, 1645), p. 587. Thomas Goodwin also links the sacraments as Ursinus and Savoy 14.1 does. He says, "He hath *given gifts unto men*, not that they may be converted onely, but also to *build them up, for the edifying of the body of Christ*: hee speaks as if that were one maine end. Therefore the word is not onely compared to *seed*, that begets men, but to *milke* also, that so babes may grow, and to *strong meat*, that men may grow, and so all sorts of Christians may grow. So also the Sacraments, their principall end is growth, and not to convert, but to increase; as meat puts not life in, but is ordained for growth, where life is already." Tho: Goodwin *The Tryall of A Christians Growth* (London: Printed for M. Flesher, 1641).

³⁰ idem

the Holy Spirit. The preacher is a vessel that God uses, unto His glory and by His Spirit, to bring His elect unto Himself. It is the ordinary way God works.

Encouragement:

“He is the best friend who tells me the most truth!”³¹ This is a sure encouragement to those who preach Christ. A minister speaks to those who will hear the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ. They hear either to their salvation, preparation, or damnation. He tells of Redemption through His blood (Eph. 1:7). He speaks of the mercy of Christ (Titus 3:5). He articulates “that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved,” (Romans 10:9). He tells of these truths, holding no truth back, without pause, excuse, or hesitation. He then looks for the Spirit to bless. It is not his words, but God’s Word applied to the heart that is effectual in the life of God’s elect. “This is all I say, God is a God of free grace, and faith is the gift of his grace; he waits to be gracious to give his free grace and all the gifts of it freely to those that need it, nothing in the creature but want, makes it an object for Gods grace; for he gives all freely without price, and without money.”³² This is the minister’s calling, and it is a great blessing to serve the Living God in such a manner. God works in him, and through him, and into the lives of His elect. God uses the preaching of His Word to bring those whom He loves with an everlasting love into a relationship with Himself.

³¹ J. C. Ryle, *Holiness* (Webster, New York: Evangelical Press, 2007), p. 281

³² Robert Ticmborne, *The Rest of Faith: That is, Souls fixed and established in God by believing on him through the Lord Jesus Christ*. (London: Printed by M. Simmons, 1649), p. 52.

When a minister walks into the pulpit he has every reason to be encouraged at the outcome. There is an undeniable call to labor hard and have an accountable ministry – some things are assumed in the life of a pastor. However, there are good reasons for a minister to take great hope in the outcome of his efforts. When he preaches Christ and seeks God’s glory in his preaching, the results are not up to him. He is aiming at something he cannot do. He is striving in an area where he cannot have any success without the blessing of God. This being true, it is God’s “ordinary” means of working that souls are brought to Christ, even into Christ, through the ministry of the Word. “THE First and Principal Duty of a *Pastor* is *to feed the flock* by diligent Preaching of the Word. It is a promise relating to the New Testament; that *God would give unto his Church Pastors according to his own heart, which should feed them with Knowledge and Understanding, Jer. 3:15.* This is by Teaching or Preaching the Word, and no otherwise. This *feeding* is of the *Essence* of the *Office* of a Pastor, as unto the exercise of it; so that he who *doth* not, or *cannot*, or *will* not *feed the flock*, is no Pastor.”³³

³³ John Owen, *The True Nature of a Gospel Church and its Government* (London: Printed for William Harthall, 1689), p. 82.