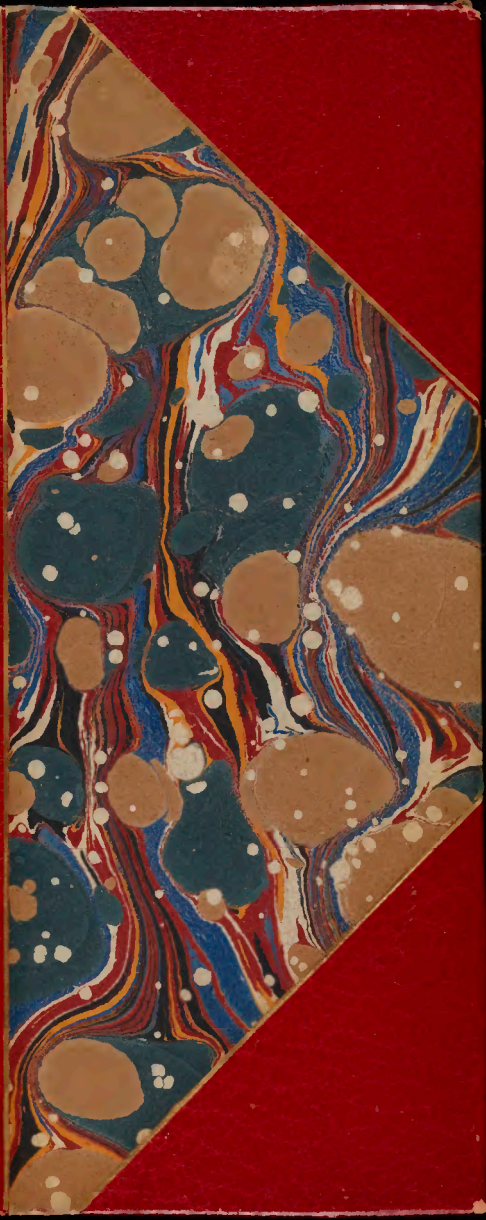

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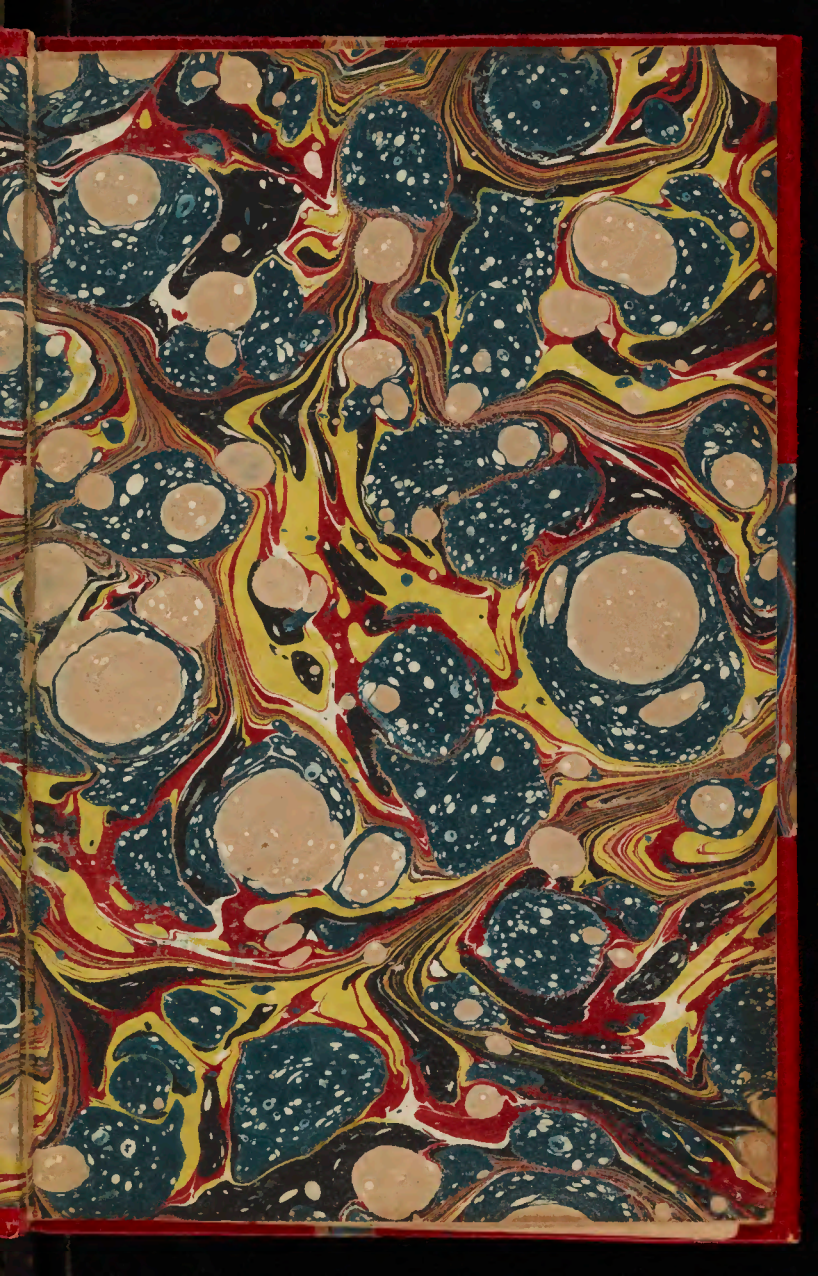

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THE DANGER OF An Unconverted MINISTRY,

Considered in a

SERMON

On MARK VI. 34.

Preached at *Nottingham*, in *Pennsylvania*, *March* 8. ANNO 1739,40.

By *GILBERT TENNENT*, A. M.
And Minister of the Gospel in *New-Brunswick*, *New-Jersey*.

Jerem. V. 30, 31. *A wonderful and horrible Thing is committed in the Land: The Prophets prophesy falsely, and the Priests bear Rule by their Means, and my People love to have it so; and what will they do in the End thereof?*

PHILADELPHIA:
Printed by BENJAMIN FRANKLIN,
In *Market-street*, 1740.

To the People of *Nottingham*,

The *Epiſtle Dedicatory.*

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Dear Friends!

I Thought it proper to dedicate to you the following Sermon, which I delivered among you, as a Teſtimony of my Regard for you; and deſire that you might be directed in the Choice of a Miniſter, that ſo that important Affair might be managed, to your ſpiritual and immortal Benefit.

If any ſhould object againſt the Stile, and ſay, That it is too pointed; I anſwer, That it is not keener than the Reflections of Chriſt himſelf againſt the old Phariſees. So far as I know my Heart, it is Grief for the Injuries that have been done to the Church of God by natural Miniſters, that has extorted ſuch Acrimony from my Pen.

If there be any Rule of any Church, that ſeems to contradict what is offered in the following Diſcourſe, it ought to be conſidered, that there is a great Difference between the flouriſhing *and* declining *State of the Church, and that* Every general Rule admits of Exceptions.

May the LORD ſcourge Hirelings out of his Temple, and ſupply you with a faithful Miniſter, according to His own Heart, that may feed you with Knowledge and Underſtanding. I remain

Your hearty Well-wiſher and humble Servant,

G. TENNENT.

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Mark VI. 34.

And Jesus, when he came out, saw much People, and was moved with Compassion towards them, because they were as Sheep not having a Shepherd.

AS a faithful Ministry is a great Ornament, A Blessing, and Comfort, to the Church of GOD; even the Feet of such Messengers are beautiful: So on the contrary, an ungodly Ministry is a great Curse and Judgment: These Caterpillars labour to devour every green Thing.

THERE is nothing that may more justly call forth our saddest Sorrows, and make all our Powers and Passions mourn, in the most doleful Accents, the most incessant, insatiable, and deploring Agonies; than the melancholy Case of such, who have no faithful Ministry! This Truth is set before our Minds in a strong Light, in the Words that I have chosen now to insist upon; in which we have an Account of our LORD's Grief, with the Causes of it.

WE are informed, That our dear Redeemer was moved with Compassion towards them. The Original Word signifies the strongest and most vehement Pity, issuing from the innermost Bowels.

BUT what was the Cause of this great and compassionate Commotion in the Heart of Christ? It was because he saw much People as Sheep having no Shepherd. Why, had the People then no Teachers? O yes! they had Heaps of Pharisee-Teachers, that

came out, no doubt after they had been at the Feet of *Gamaliel* the usual Time, and according to the Acts, Canons, and Traditions of the Jewish Church. But notwithstanding of the great Crowds of these Orthodox, Letter-learned and regular Pharisees, our Lord laments the unhappy Case of that great Number of People, who, in the Days of his Flesh, had no better Guides: Because that those were as good as none (in many Respects) in our Saviour's Judgment. For all them, the People were as Sheep without a Shepherd.

FROM the Words of our Text, the following Proposition offers itself to our Consideration, *viz.*

That the Case of such is much to be pitied, who have no other, but Pharisee-Shepherds, or unconverted Teachers.

IN discoursing upon this Subject, I would

I. *Enquire into the Characters of the Old Pharisee-Teachers.*

II. *Shew, why the Case of such People, who have no better, should be pitied.* And

III. *Shew, how Pity should be expressed upon this mournful Occasion!* And

FIRST I am to enquire into the *Characters of the Old Pharisee-Teachers.* Now, I think the most notorious Branches of their Character, were these, viz. *Pride, Policy, Malice, Ignorance, Covetousness,* and *Bigotry to human Inventions in religious Matters.*

THE old Pharisees were very proud and conceity; they loved the uppermost Seats in the Synagogues, and to be called Rabbi, Rabbi; they were masterly and positive in their Assertions, as if forsooth Knowledge must die with them; they look'd upon others that differed from them, and the common People, with an Air of Disdain; and especially any who had a Respect for JESUS and his Doctrine, and disliked them; they judged such accursed. THE

THE old Pharisee-Shepherds were as crafty as Foxes; they tried by all means to ensnare our Lord, by their captious Questions, and to expose him to the Displeasure of the State; while in the mean Time, by sly and sneaking Methods, they tried to secure for themselves the Favour of the Grandees, and the People's Applause; and this they obtained to their Satisfaction. *Joh.* 7. 48.

BUT while they exerted the Craft of Foxes, they did not forget to breath forth the Cruelty of Wolves, in a malicious Aspersing the Person of Christ, and in a violent Opposing of the Truths, People, and Power of his Religion. Yea, the most stern and strict of them, were the Ring-leaders of the Party: Witness *Saul*'s Journey to *Damascus*, with Letters from the Chief Priest, to bring bound to *Jerusalem*, all that he could find of that Way. It's true the Pharisees did not proceed to violent Measures with our Saviour and his Disciples just at first; but that was not owing to their good Nature, but their Policy; for they feared the People. They must keep the People in their Interests: Ay, that was the main Chance, the Compass that directed all their Proceedings; and therefore such sly cautious Methods must be pursued as might consist herewith. They wanted to root vital Religion out of the World; but they found it beyond their Thumb.

ALTHOUGH some of the old Pharisee-Shepherds had a very fair and strict Out-side; yet were they ignorant of the New Birth: Witness Rabbi *Nicodemus*, who talk'd like a Fool about it. Hear how our LORD cursed those plaister'd Hypocrites, *Mat.* 23. 27, 28. *Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites; for ye are like whited Sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead Bones, and of all Uncleanness. Even so ye also appear righteous unto Men, but within ye are full of*

Hyocrisie and Iniquity. Ay, if they had but a little of the Learning then in Fashion, and a fair Outside, they were presently put into the Priests Office, though they had no Experience of the New Birth. O sad!

THE old Pharisees, for all their long Prayers and other pious Pretences, had their Eyes, with *Judas*, fixed upon the Bag. Why, they came into the Priests Office for a Piece of Bread; they took it up as a Trade, and therefore endeavoured to make the best Market of it; they could: O Shame!

IT may be further observ'd, That the Pharisee-Teachers in Christ's Time, were great Bigots to small Matters in Religion. *Mat.* 23. 23. *Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites; for ye pay Tyth of Mint, and Anise, and Cumin, and have omitted the weightier Matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy and Faith.* The Pharisees were fired with a Party-Zeal; they compassed Sea and Land to make a Proselyte; and yet when he was made, they made him twofold more the Child of Hell than themselves. They were also bigotted to Human Inventions in Religious Matters: *Paul* himself, while he was a natural Man, was wonderful zealous for the Traditions of the Fathers: Ay, those poor blind Guides, as our LORD testifies, strained at a Gnat, and swallowed a Camel.

AND what a mighty Respect had they for the Sabbath Day forsooth? in so much that Christ and his Disciples must be charged with the Breach thereof, for doing Works of Mercy and Necessity. Ah the Rottenness of those Hypocrites! It was not so much Respect to the Sabbath, as Malice against Christ; that was the Occasion of the Charge; they wanted some plausible Pretence to offer against him, in order to blacken his Character.

AND

And what a great Love had they in Pretence to those pious Prophets, who were dead before they were born? while in the mean Time they were persecuting the Prince of Prophets! Hear how the King of the Church speaks to them, upon this Head: *Matth.* 23. 29—33. *Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites; because ye build the Tombs of the Prophets, and garnish the Sepulchres of the Righteous; and say, If we had been in the Days of our Fathers, we would not have been Partakers with them in the Blood of the Prophets. Ye Serpents, ye Generation of Vipers, how can ye escape the Damnation of Hell?* The

Second General Head of Discourse, is to shew, *Why such People, who have no better than the old Pharisee-Teachers, are to be pitied?* And

1. Natural Men have no Call of GOD to the Ministerial Work, under the Gospel-Dispensation.

Isn't it a principal Part of the ordinary Call of GOD to the Ministerial Work, to aim at the Glory of GOD, and, in Subordination thereto, the Good of Souls, as their chief Marks in their Undertaking that Work? And can any natural Man on Earth do this? No! no! Every Skin of them has an evil Eye; for no Cause can produce Effects above its own Power. Are not wicked Men forbid to meddle in Things sacred? *Ps.* 50. 16. *But unto the Wicked, GOD saith, What hast thou to do to declare my Statutes, or that thou shouldst take my Covenant in thy Mouth?* Now, are not all unconverted Men wicked Men? does not the Lord Jesus inform us, *John* 10. 1. That *he who entreth not by the Door into the Sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other Way, the same is a Thief and a Robber?* In the 9*th v.* Christ tells us, That *He is the Door*; and that *if any Man enter in by him, he shall be saved, by him*, i. e. By Faith in him, says *Henry*. Hence we read of a

Door of Faith, being opened to the Gentiles. *Acts* 14. 27. It confirms this Gloſs, that Salvation is annexed to the Entrance before-mentioned. Remarkable is that Saying of our Saviour, *Matth.* 4. 19. *Follow me, and I will make you Fiſhers of Men.* See, our LORD will not make Men Miniſters, 'til they follow him. Men that do not follow Chriſt, may fiſh faithfully for a good Name, and for worldly Pelf; but not for the Converſion of Sinners to God. Is it reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that they will be earneſtly concerned for others Salvation, when they ſlight their own? Our LORD reprov'd *Nicodemus* for taking upon him the Office of inſtructing others, while he himſelf was a Stranger to the New Birth, *Joh.* 3. 10. *Art thou a Maſter of Iſrael, and knoweſt not theſe Things?* The Apoſtle *Paul* (in 1 *Tim.* 1. 12.) thanks GOD for counting him faithful, and putting him into the Miniſtry; which plainly ſuppoſes, That GOD Almighty does not ſend Phariſees and natural Men into the Miniſtry: For how can theſe Men be faithful, that have no Faith? It's true, Men may put them into the Miniſtry, through Unfaithfulneſs, or Miſtake; or Credit and Money may draw them, and the Devil may drive them into it, knowing by long Experience, of what ſpecial Service they may be to his Kingdom in that Office: But GOD ſends not ſuch hypocritical Varlets. Hence *Timothy* was directed by the Apoſtle *Paul*, to commit the miniſterial Work to faithful Men. 2 *Tim.* 2. 2. And do not theſe Qualifications, neceſſary for Church-Officers, ſpecified 1 *Tim.* 3. 7,8,9,11. & *Tit.* 1. 7, 8. plainly ſuppoſe converting Grace? How elſe can they avoid being greedy of filthy Lucre? How elſe can they hold the Myſtery of Faith in a pure Conſcience, and be faithful in all Things? How elſe can they be Lovers of Good, ſober, juſt, holy, temperate?

2. The Miniſtry of natural Men is uncomfortable to gracious Souls. The

The Enmity that is put between the Seed of the Woman and the Seed of the Serpent, will now and then be creating Jarrs: And no wonder; for as it was of old, so it is now, *He that was born after the Flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit.* This Enmity is not one Grain less, in unconverted Ministers, than in others; tho' possibly it may be better polished with Wit and Rhetorick, and gilded with the specious Names of Zeal, Fidelity, Peace, good Order, and Unity.

Natural Men, not having true Love to Christ and the Souls of their Fellow-Creatures, hence their Discourses are cold and saplefs, and as it were freeze between their Lips! And not being sent of GOD, they want that divine Authority, with which the faithful Ambassadors of Christ are clothed, who herein resemble their blessed Master, of whom it is said, That *He taught as one having Authority, and not as the Scribes.* Matth. 7. 29.

And Pharisee-Teachers, having no Experience of a special Work of the Holy Ghost, upon their own Souls, are therefore neither inclined to, nor fitted for Discoursing, frequently, clearly, and pathetically, upon such important Subjects. The Application of their Discourses, is either short, or indistinct and general. They difference not the precious from the vile, and divide not to every Man his Portion, according to the Apostolical Direction to *Timothy.* No! they carelessly offer a common Mess to their People, and leave it to them, to divide it among themselves, as they see fit. This is indeed their general Practice, which is bad enough: But sometimes they do worse, by misapplying the Word, through Ignorance, or Anger. They often strengthen the Hands of the Wicked, by promising him Life. They comfort People, before they convince them; sow before they plow; and are busy in raising a

Fabrick

Fabrick, before they lay a Foundation. These foolish Builders do but strengthen Men's carnal Security, by their soft, selfish, cowardly Discourses. They have not the Courage, or Honesty, to thrust the Nail of Terror into sleeping Souls; nay, sometimes they strive with all their Might, to fasten Terror into the Hearts of the Righteous, and so to make those sad, whom GOD would not have made sad! And this happens, when pious People begin to suspect their Hypocrisie, for which they have good Reason. I may add, That inasmuch as Pharisee-Teachers seek after Righteousness as it were by the Works of the Law themselves, they therefore do not distinguish as they ought, between *Law* and *Gospel*, in their Discourses to others. They keep Driving, Driving, to Duty, Duty, under this Notion, That it will recommend natural Men to the Favour of GOD, or entitle them to the Promises of Grace and Salvation: And thus those blind Guides fix a deluded World upon the false Foundation of their own Righteousness, and so exclude them from the dear Redeemer. All the Doings of unconverted Men, not proceeding from the Principles of Faith, Love, and a new Nature, nor being directed to the divine Glory as their highest End, but flowing from, and tending to Self, as their Principle and End; are doubtless damnably wicked in their Manner of Performance, and do deserve the Wrath and Curse of a Sin-avenging GOD; neither can any other Encouragement be justly given them, but this, That in the Way of Duty, there is a Peradventure or Probability of obtaining Mercy.

And natural Men, wanting the Experience of those spiritual Difficulties, which pious Souls are exposed to, in this Vale of Tears; they know not how to speak a Word to the Weary in Season.

Their Prayers are also cold; little Child-like Love to God, or Pity to poor perishing Souls, runs thro' their Veins. Their

Their Converſation hath nothing of the Savour of Chriſt, neither is it perfumed with the Spices of Heaven. They ſeem to make as little Diſtinction in their Practice, as Preaching. They love thoſe Unbelievers, that are kind to them, better than many Chriſtians, and chuſe them for Companions; contrary to *Pſ.* 15. 4. *Pſ.* 119. 115. & *Gal.* 6. 10. Poor Chriſtians are ſtunted and ſtarv'd, who are put to feed on ſuch bare Paſtures, and ſuch dry Nurſes; as the Rev. Mr. *Hilderſham* juſtly calls them. It's only when the wiſe Virgins ſleep, that they can bear with thoſe dead Dogs, that can't bark; but when the LORD revives his People, they can't but abhor them! O! it is ready to break their very Hearts with Grief, to ſee, how luke-warm thoſe Phariſee-Teachers are in their publick Diſcourſes, while Sinners are ſinking into Damnation, in Multitudes! But

3. The Miniſtry of natural Men, is for the moſt part unprofitable; which is confirmed by a threefold Evidence, *viz.* of Scripture, Reaſon, and Experience. Such as the LORD ſends not, he himſelf aſſures us, ſhall not profit the People at all. *Jer.* 23. 32. Mr. *Pool* juſtly gloſſeth upon this Paſſage of ſacred Scripture, thus, *viz.* 'That none can expect God's 'Bleſſing upon their Miniſtry, that are not called 'and ſent of GOD into the Miniſtry. And right Reaſon will inform us, how unfit Inſtruments they are to negotiate that Work they pretend to. Is a blind Man fit to be a Guide in a very dangerous Way? Is a dead Man fit to bring others to Life? a mad Man fit to give Counſel in a Matter of Life and Death? Is a poſſeſſed Man fit to caſt out Devils? a Rebel, an Enemy to GOD, fit to be ſent on an Embaſſy of Peace, to bring Rebels into a State of Friendſhip with GOD? a Captive bound in the maſſy Chains of Darkneſs and Guilt, a proper Perſon,

ſon, to ſet others at Liberty? a Leper, or one that has Plague-ſores upon him, fit to be a good Phyſician? Is an ignorant Ruſtick, that has never been at Sea in his Life, fit to be a Pilot, to keep Veſſels from being daſhed to Pieces upon Rocks and Sand-banks? 'Isn't an unconverted Miniſter like 'a Man who would learn others to ſwim, before he 'has learn'd it himſelf, and ſo is drowned in the 'Act, and dies like a Fool?

I may add, that ſad Experience verifies what has been now obſerved, concerning the Unprofitableneſs of the Miniſtry of unconverted Men. Look into the Congregations of unconverted Miniſters, and ſee what a ſad Security reigns there; not a Soul convinced that can be heard of, for many Years together; and yet the Miniſters are eaſy; for they ſay they do their Duty! Ay, a ſmall Matter will ſatisfy us, in the Want of that, which we have no great Deſire after. But when Perſons have their Eyes opened, and their Hearts ſet upon the Work of God; they are not ſo ſoon ſatisfied with their Doings, and with Want of Succeſs for a Time. O! they mourn with *Micah*, that they are as thoſe that gather the Summer-Fruits, as the Grape-gleaning of the Vintage.— Mr. *Baxter* juſtly obſerves, 'That thoſe 'who ſpeak about their Doings in the aforeſaid 'Manner, are like to do little Good to the Church 'of God.' 'But many Miniſters (as Mr. *Bracel* 'obſerves) think the Goſpel flouriſhes among them 'when the People are in Peace, and many come to 'hear the Word, and to the Sacrament.' If with the other they get their Salaries well paid; O then it is fine Times indeed! in their Opinion. O ſad! And they are full of Hopes, that they do good, tho' they know nothing about it. But what Comfort can a conſciencious Man, who travels in Birth, that Chriſt may be form'd in his Hearers Hearts, take

from

from what he knows not? Will a hungry Stomach be ſatisfied with Dreams about Meat? I believe not; tho' I confeſs a full one may.

What if ſome Inſtances could be ſhewn, of unconverted Miniſters being Inſtrumental, in convincing Perſons of their loſt State? The Thing is very rare, and extraordinary. And for what I know, as many Inſtances may be given, of Satan's convincing Perſons, by his Temptations. Indeed it's a kind of Chance-medly, both in reſpect of the Father, and his Children; when any ſuch Event happens. And isn't this the Reaſon, why a Work of Conviction and Converſion has been ſo rarely heard of, for a long Time, in the Churches, till of late, *viz.* That the Bulk of her ſpiritual Guides, were ſtone-blind, and ſtone-dead!

4. The Miniſtry of natural Men is dangerous, both in reſpect of the Doctrines, and Practice of Piety. The Doctrines of *Original Sin*, *Juſtification by Faith alone*, and the other Points of *Calviniſm*, are very croſs to the Grain of unrenewed Nature. And tho' Men, by the Influence of a good Education, and Hopes of Preferment, may have the Edge of their natural Enmity againſt them blunted; yet it's far from being broken or removed; it's only the ſaving Grace of God, that can give us a true Reliſh, for thoſe Nature-humbling Doctrines; and ſo effectually ſecure us from being infected by the contrary. Is not the Carnality of the Miniſtry, one great Cauſe of the general Spread of *Arminianiſm*, *Socinianiſm*, *Arianiſm*, and *Deiſm*, at this Day through the World?

And alas! what poor Guides are natural Miniſters to thoſe, who are under ſpiritual Trouble? they either ſlight ſuch Diſtreſs altogether, and call it Melancholy, or Madneſs, or dawb thoſe that are under it, with untemper'd Mortar. Our LORD

assures us, That the Salt which hath lost its Savour, is good for nothing; some say, 'It genders Worms and Vermine.' Now, what Savour have Pharisee-Ministers? In Truth, a very stinking One, both in the Nostrils of God and good Men. 'Be these 'Moral Negroes never so white in the Mouth, (as 'one expresseth it) yet will they hinder, instead of 'helping others, in at the strait Gate.' Hence is that Threatning of our LORD, against them, *Mat.* 23.13. *Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites; for ye shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against Men; for ye neither go in yourselves, nor suffer those that are entering, to go in.* Pharisee-Teachers will with the utmost Hate oppose the very Work of God's Spirit, upon the Souls of Men; and labour by all Means to blacken it, as well as the Instruments, which the Almighty improves to promote the same; if it comes near their Borders, and interferes with their Credit or Interest. Thus did the Pharisees deal with our Saviour.

If it be objected, against what has been offer'd, under this General Head of Discourse, That *Judas* was sent by Christ; I answer, (1) That *Judas*'s Ministry was partly Legal, inasmuch as during that Period, the Disciples were subject to Jewish Observances, and sent only to the House of *Israel*, Matth. 10. 5,6. And in that they waited after Christ's Resurrection for another Mission, *Act.* 1. 4. which we find they obtained, and that different from the former. *Matth.* 28. 19. (2) *Judas*'s Ministry was extraordinary necessary, in order to fulfil some antient Prophesies concerning him. *Acts* 1. 16,17,18, 20. *Joh.* 13. 18. I fear that the Abuse of this Instance, has brought many *Judases* into the Ministry, whose chief Desire, like their great Grandfather, is to finger the Pence, and carry the Bag. But let such hireling murderous Hypocrites take Care, that they

they don't feel the Force of a Halter in this World, and an aggravated Damnation in the next.

Again, if it be objected, That *Paul* rejoyced, that the Gospel was preached, tho' of Contention, and not sincerely; I answer, The Expression signifies the Apostle's great Self-Denyal. Some laboured to eclipse his Fame and Character, by contentious Preaching, thinking thereby to afflict him; but they were mistaken; as to that, he was easy. For he had long before learned, to die to his own Reputation. The Apostle's Rejoycing was comparative only; he would rather that Christ should be preached out of Envy, than not at all. Especially considering the gross Ignorance of the Doctrinal Knowledge of the Gospel, which prevailed almost universally in that Age of the World. Besides the Apostle knew that that Tryal should be sanctified to him, to promote his spiritual Progress in Goodness, and perhaps prove a Mean of procuring his temporal Freedom; and therefore he would rejoyce. It is certain, we may both rejoyce and mourn, in relation to the same Thing, upon different Accounts, without any Contradiction. But the

THIRD GENERAL HEAD, was to shew, *How Pity should be expressed upon this mournful Occasion!*

My Brethren, we should mourn over those, that are destitute of faithful Ministers, and sympathize with them. Our Bowels should be moved with the most compassionate Tenderness, over those dear fainting Souls, that are *as Sheep having no Shepherd*; and that after the Example of our blessed LORD!

Dear Sirs! we should also most earnestly pray for them, that the compassionate Saviour may preserve them, by his mighty Power, thro' Faith unto Salvation; support their sinking Spirits, under the melancholy Uneasinesses of a dead Ministry; sanctify and

and ſweeten to them the dry Morſels they get under ſuch blind Men, when they have none better to repair to.

And more eſpecially, my Brethren, we ſhould pray to the LORD of the Harveſt, to ſend forth faithful Labourers into his Harveſt; ſeeing that the Harveſt truly is plenteous, but the Labourers are few. And O Sirs! how humble, believing, and importunate ſhould we be in this Petition! O! let us follow the LORD, Day and Night, with Cries, Tears, Pleadings, and Groanings upon this Account! For GOD knows, there is a great Neceſſity of it. O! thou Fountain of Mercy, and Father of Pity, pour forth upon thy poor Children a Spirit of Prayer, for the Obtaining this important Mercy! Help, help, O Eternal GOD and Father, for Chriſt's ſake!

And indeed, my Brethren, we ſhould join our Endeavours to our Prayers. The moſt likely Method to ſtock the Church with a faithful Miniſtry, in the preſent Situation of Things, the publick Academies being ſo much corrupted and abuſed generally, is, To encourage private Schools, or Seminaries of Learning, which are under the Care of ſkilful and experienced Chriſtians; in which thoſe only ſhould be admitted, who upon ſtrict Examination, have in the Judgment of a reaſonable Charity, the plain Evidences of experimental Religion. Pious and experienced Youths, who have a good natural Capacity, and great Deſires after the Miniſterial Work, from good Motives, might be ſought for, and found up and down the Country, and put to Private Schools of the Prophets; eſpecially in ſuch Places, where the Publick ones are not. This Method, in my Opinion, has a noble Tendency, to build up the Church of God. And thoſe who have any Love to Chriſt, or Deſire after the Coming of his Kingdom, ſhould be ready according to their Ability, to give

give ſomewhat, from time to time, for the Support of ſuch poor Youths, who have nothing of their own. And truly, Brethren, this Charity to the Souls of Men, is the moſt noble kind of Charity. O! if the Love of God be in you, it will conſtrain you to do ſomething, to promote ſo noble and neceſſary a Work. It looks Hypocrite-like to go no further, when other Things are required, than cheap Prayer. Don't think it much, if the Phariſees ſhould be offended at ſuch a Propoſal; theſe ſubtle ſelfiſh Hypocrites are wont to be ſcar'd about their Credit, and their Kingdom; and truly they are both little worth, for all the Buſtle they make about them. If they could help it, they wou'dn't let one faithful Man come into the Miniſtry; and therefore their Oppoſition is an encouraging Sign. Let all the Followers of the Lamb ſtand up and act for GOD againſt all Oppoſers: Who is upon GOD's Side? who?

THE IMPROVEMENT of this Subject remains. And,

1. If it be ſo, That the Caſe of thoſe, who have no other, or no better than Phariſee-Teachers, is to be pitied: Then what a Scrole and Scene of Mourning, and Lamentation, and Wo, is opened! becauſe of the Swarms of Locuſts, the Crowds of Phariſees, that have as covetouſly as cruelly, crept into the Miniſtry, in this adulterous Generation! who as nearly reſemble the Character given of the old Phariſees, in the Doctrinal Part of this Diſcourſe, as one Crow's Egg does another. It is true ſome of the modern Phariſees have learned to prate a little more orthodoxly about the New Birth, than their Predeceſſor *Nicodemus*, who are, in the mean Time, as great Strangers to the feeling Experience of it, as he. They are blind who ſee not this to be the Caſe of the Body of the Clergy, of this Generation. And O!

that our Heads were Waters, and our Eyes a Fountain of Tears, that we could Day and Night lament, with the utmoſt Bitterneſs, the doleful Caſe of the poor Church of God, upon this account.

2. From what has been ſaid, we may learn, That ſuch who are contented under a dead Miniſtry, have not in them the Temper of that Saviour they profeſs. It's an awful Sign, that they are as blind as Moles, and as dead as Stones, without any ſpiritual Taſte and Reliſh. And alas! isn't this the Caſe of Multitudes? If they can get one, that has the Name of a Miniſter, with a Band, and a Black Coat or Gown to carry on a Sabbath-days among them, although never ſo coldly, and inſucceſsfully; if he is free from groſs Crimes in Practice, and takes good Care to keep at a due Diſtance from their Conſciences, and is never troubled about his Inſucceſsfulneſs; O! think the poor Fools, that is a fine Man indeed; our Miniſter is a prudent charitable Man, he is not always harping upon Terror, and ſounding Damnation in our Ears, like ſome raſh-headed Preachers, who by their uncharitable Methods, are ready to put poor People out of their Wits, or to run them into Deſpair; O! how terrible a Thing is that Deſpair! Ay, our Miniſter, honeſt Man, gives us good Caution againſt it. Poor ſilly Souls! conſider ſeriouſly theſe Paſſages, of the Prophet *Jeremiah*, *c.* 5. 30,31.

3. We may learn, the Mercy and Duty of thoſe that enjoy a faithful Miniſtry. Let ſuch glorify God, for ſo diſtinguiſhing a Privilege, and labour to walk worthy of it, to all Well-pleaſing; leſt for their Abuſe thereof, they be expoſed to a greater Damnation.

4. If the Miniſtry of natural Men be as it has been repreſented; Then it is both lawful and expedient to go from them to hear Godly Perſons; yea, it's ſo far from being ſinful to do this, that one who

lives

lives under a pious Miniſter of leſſer Gifts, after having honeſtly endeavour'd to get Benefit by his Miniſtry, and yet gets little or none, but doth find real Benefit and more Benefit elſewhere; I ſay, he may lawfully go, and that frequently, where he gets moſt Good to his precious Soul, after regular Application to the Paſtor where he lives, for his Conſent, and propoſing the Reaſons thereof; when this is done in the Spirit of Love and Meekneſs, without Contempt of any, as alſo without raſh Anger, or vain Curioſity.

Natural Reaſon will inform us, that Good is deſireable for its own ſake. Now, as Dr. *Voetius* obſerves, Good added to Good, makes it a greater Good, and ſo more deſireable; and therefore Evil as Evil, or a leſſer Good, which is comparatively Evil, cannot be the Object of Deſire.

There is a natural Inſtinct put even into the irrational Creatures, by the Author of their Being, to ſeek after the greater natural Good, as far as they know it. Hence the Birds of the Air fly to the warmer Climaets, in order to ſhun the Winter-Cold, and alſo doubtleſs to get better Food; *For where the Carcaſs is, there the Eagles will be gathered together.* The Beaſts of the Field ſeek the beſt Paſtures, and the Fiſhes of the Ocean ſeek after the Food they like beſt.

But the written Word of God confirms the aforeſaid Propoſition, while God by it enjoins us, *to covet earneſtly the beſt Gifts*; as alſo *to prove all Things, and hold faſt that which is good.* 1 Cor. 12. 31. 1 Theſſ. 5. 2. And is it not the Command of God, that we ſhould *grow in Grace?* 2 Pet. 3. 18. and 1 Pet. 2. 2. Now, does not every poſitive Command enjoin the Uſe of ſuch Means, as have the directeſt Tendency to anſwer the End deſigned? namely, The Duty commanded. If there be a

Variety of Means, is not the beſt to be choſen? elſe how can the Choice be called rational, and becoming an intelligent Creature? To chuſe otherwiſe knowingly, is it not contrary to common Senſe, as well as Religion, and daily confuted by the common Practice of all the rational Creation, about Things of far leſs Moment and Conſequence?

That there is a Difference and Variety in Preachers Gifts and Graces, is undeniably evident, from the united Teſtimony of Scripture and Reaſon.

And that there is a great Difference in the Degrees of Hearers Edification, under the Hearing of theſe different Gifts, is as evident to the Feeling of experienced Chriſtians, as any Thing can be to Sight.

It is alſo an unqueſtionable Truth, that ordinarily GOD bleſſes moſt the beſt Gifts, for the Hearers Edification, as by the beſt Food he gives the beſt Nouriſhment. Otherwiſe the beſt Gifts would not be deſireable, and GOD Almighty in the ordinary Courſe of his Providence, by not acting according to the Nature of Things, would be carrying on a Series of unneceſſary Miracles; which to ſuppoſe, is unreaſonable. The following Places of holy Scripture, confirm what has been laſt obſerved. 1 *Cor.* 14. 12. 1 *Tim.* 4. 14, 15, 16. 2 *Tim.* 1. 6. & *Act.* 11. 24.

If God's People have a Right to the Gifts of all God's Miniſters, pray, why mayn't they uſe them, as they have Opportunity? And if they ſhould go a few Miles farther than ordinary, to enjoy thoſe, which they profit moſt by; who do they wrong? Now, our LORD does inform his People, 1 *Cor.* 3. 22. That *whether* Paul, *or* Apollos, *or* Cephas; *all was theirs.*

But the Example of our Dear Redeemer, will give farther Light in this Argument. Tho' many of the Hearers, not only of the Phariſees, but of

John

John the Baptist, came to hear our Saviour, and that not only upon Week-days, but upon Sabbath-days, and that in great Numbers, and from very distant Places; yet he reproved them not: And did not our Lord love the Apostle *John* more than the rest, and took him with him, before others, with *Peter* and *James*, to Mount *Tabor*, and *Gethsemany?* Matth. 17. and c. 26.

To bind Men to a particular Minister, against their Judgment and Inclinations, when they are more edified elsewhere, is carnal with a Witness; a cruel Oppression of tender Consciences, a Compelling of Men to Sin: For he that doubts, is damn'd if he eat; and whatsoever is not of Faith, is Sin.

Besides it is an unscriptural Infringment on Christian Liberty; 1 *Cor.* 3. 22. It's a Yoke worse than that of *Rome* itself. Dr. *Voetius* asserts, 'That even 'among the *Papists*, as to Hearing of Sermons, the 'People are not deprived of the Liberty of Choice.' It's a Yoke like that of *Egypt*, which cruel *Pharaoh* formed for the Necks of the oppressed *Israelites*, when he obliged them to make up their stated Task of Brick, but allowed them no Straw. So we must grow in Grace and Knowledge; but in the mean time, according to the Notion of some, we are confined from using the likeliest Means, to attain that End.

If the great Ends of Hearing may be attained as well, and better, by Hearing of another Minister than our own; then I see not, why we should be under a fatal Necessity of hearing him, I mean our Parish-Minister, perpetually, or generally. Now, what are, or ought to be, the Ends of Hearing, but the Getting of Grace, and Growing in it? *Rom.* 10. 14. 1 *Pet.* 2. 2. *As Babes desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.* (Poor Babes like not dry Breasts, and living Men like not dead

Pools.) Well then, and may not these Ends be obtained out of our Parish-line? *Faith* is said to come by *Hearing*, Rom. 10. But the Apostle doesn't add, *Your Parish-Minister*. Isn't the same Word preach'd out of our Parish? and is there any Restriction in the Promises of blessing the Word to those only, who keep within their Parish-line ordinarily? If there be, I have not yet met with it; yea, I can affirm, that so far as Knowledge can be had in such Cases, I have known Persons to get saving Good to their Souls, by Hearing over their Parish-line; and this makes me earnest in Defence of it.

That which ought to be the main Motive of Hearing any, *viz.* our Souls Good, or greater Good, will excite us, if we regard our own eternal Interest, to hear there, where we attain it; and he that hears with less Views, acts like a Fool, and a Hypocrite.

Now, if it be lawful to withdraw from the Ministry of a pious Man, in the Case aforesaid; how much more, from the Ministry of a natural Man? Surely, it is both lawful and expedient, for the Reasons offered in the Doctrinal Part of this Discourse: To which let me add a few Words more.

To trust the Care of our Souls to those who have little or no Care for their own, to those who are both unskilful and unfaithful, is contrary to the common Practice of considerate Mankind, relating to the Affairs of their Bodies and Estates; and would signify, that we set light by our Souls, and did not care what became of them. For if the Blind lead the Blind, will they not both fall into the Ditch?

Is it a strange Thing to think, that GOD does not ordinarily use the Ministry of his Enemies, to turn others to be his Friends, seeing he works by suitable Means?

I cannot think, that GOD has given any Promiſe, that he will be with, and bleſs the Labours of natural Miniſters: For if he had, he would be ſurely as good as his Word. But I can neither ſee, nor hear of any Bleſſing upon theſe Men's Labours; unleſs it be a rare and wonderful Inſtance of Chance-medly! whereas the Miniſtry of faithful Men bloſſoms and bears Fruit, as the Rod of *Aaron*. Jer. 23. 22. *But if they had ſtood in my Counſel, and had cauſed my People to hear my Words, then they ſhould have turned them from their evil Way, and from the Evil of their Doings.*

From ſuch as have a Form of Godlineſs, and deny the Power thereof, we are enjoined to turn away, 2 *Tim.* 3. 5. And are there not many ſuch?

Our LORD adviſed his Diſciples, to beware of the Leaven of the Phariſees, *Mat.* 16. 6. by which he ſhews that he meant their Doctrine and Hypocriſie, *Mark* 8. 15. *Luke* 12. 1. which were both ſour enough.

Memorable is the Anſwer of our LORD to his Diſciples, *Mat.* 15. 12,13,14. *Then came his Diſciples and ſaid unto him, Knoweſt thou, that the Phariſees were offended? — And he anſwered and ſaid, Every Plant which my Heavenly Father hath not planted, ſhall be rooted up: Let them alone; they be blind Leaders of the Blind: And if the Blind lead the Blind, both ſhall fall into the Ditch.*

If it is objected, That we are bid to go to hear thoſe, that ſit in *Moſes'* Chair, *Mat.* 23. 2, 3. I would anſwer this, in the Words of a Body of diſſenting Miniſters, *viz.* 'That Sitting in *Moſes'* 'Chair, ſignifies a Succeeding of *Moſes* in the ordi- 'nary Part of his Office and Authority; ſo did '*Joſhua*, and the 70 Elders, *Exod.* 18. 21—26. 'Now, *Moſes* was no Prieſt, (ſay they) tho' of

'*Levi*'s Tribe, but King in *Jeſhurun*, a civil Ruler 'and Judge, choſen by God. *Exod.* 18. 13.' Therefore no more is meant by the Scripture in the Objection, but that it is the Duty of People to hear and obey the lawful Commands of the Civil Magiſtrate, according to *Rom.* 13. 5.

If it be oppoſed to the preceeding Reaſonings, That ſuch an Opinion and Practice would be apt to cauſe Heats and Contentions among People;

I anſwer, That the aforeſaid Practice, accompanied with Love, Meekneſs, and Humility, is not the proper *Cauſe* of thoſe Diviſions, but the *Occaſion* only, or the Cauſe by Accident, and not by itſelf. If a Perſon exerciſing Modeſty and Love in his Carriage to his Miniſter and Neighbours, through Uprightneſs of Heart, deſigning nothing but his own greater Good, repairs there frequently where he attains it; is this any reaſonable Cauſe of Anger? will any be offended with him, becauſe he loves his Soul, and ſeeks the greater Good thereof, and is not like a ſenſeleſs Stone, without Choice, Senſe, and Taſte? Pray, muſt we leave off every Duty, that is the Occaſion of Contention or Diviſion? Then we muſt quit powerful Religion altogether. For *he that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, ſhall ſuffer Perſecution.* And particularly we muſt carefully avoid faithful Preaching: For that is wont to occaſion Diſturbances and Diviſions, eſpecially when accompanied with divine Power. 1 *Theſſ.* 1. 5,6. *Our Goſpel came not unto you in Word only, but in Power:* And then it is added, That they *received the Word in much Affliction.* And the Apoſtle *Paul* informs us, 1 *Cor.* 16. 9. That a great Door and effectual was open'd unto him, and that there were many Adverſaries. Bleſſed *Paul* was accounted a common Diſturber of the Peace, as well as *Elijah* long before him: And yet he left not off Preaching for all that. Yea, our

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bleſſed LORD informs us, That he came not to ſend Peace on Earth, but rather a Sword, Variance, Fire, and Diviſion, and that even among Relations. *Matth.* 10. 34, 35, 36. *Luke* 12. 49,51,52,53. As alſo, That while the ſtrong Man armed keeps the Houſe, all the Goods are in Peace. It is true the Power the Goſpel is not the proper Cauſe of thoſe Diviſions, but the innocent Occaſion only: No; the proper Cauſe of ſinful Diviſions, is that Enmity againſt GOD, and Holineſs, which is in the Hearts of natural Men, of every Order; being ſtirred up by the Devil, and their own proud and ſelfiſh Luſts. And very often natural Men, who are the proper Cauſes of the Diviſions aforeſaid, are wont to deal with God's Servants, as *Potiphar*'s Wife did by *Joſeph*; they lay all the Blame of their own Wickedneſs at their Doors, and make a loud Cry!

Such as confine Oppoſition and Diviſion, as following upon living Godlineſs and ſucceſsful Preaching, to the firſt Ages of Chriſtianity; it is much to be fear'd neither know themſelves, nor the Goſpel of Chriſt. For ſurely the nature of true Religion, as well as of Men and Devils, is the ſame in every Age.

Is not the viſible Church compoſed of Perſons of the moſt contrary Characters? While ſome are ſincere Servants of God, are not many Servants of Satan, under a religious Maſk? and have not theſe a fixed Enmity againſt the other? How is it then poſſible, that a Harmony ſhould ſubſiſt between ſuch, till their Nature be changed? Can Light dwell with Darkneſs?

Undoubtedly it is a great Duty, to avoid giving juſt Cauſe of Offence to any; and it is alſo highly neceſſary, that pious Souls ſhould maintain Union and Harmony among themſelves; notwithſtanding of their different Opinions in leſſer Things. And

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no doubt this is the Drift of the many Exhortations which we have to Peace and Unity in Scripture.

Surely, it cannot be reaſonably ſuppos'd, that we are exhorted to a Unity in any Thing that is wicked, or inconſiſtent with the Good, or greater Good of our poor Souls: For that would be like the Unity of the Devils, a Legion of which dwelt peaceably in one Man: Or like the Unity of *Ahab*'s falſe Prophets; all theſe four Hundred Daubers were very peaceable and much united, and all harped on the pleaſing String: Ay, they were moderate Men, and had the Majority on their Side.

But poſſibly ſome may again object againſt Perſons going to hear others, beſides their own Miniſters; the Scripture about *Paul* and *Apollos*, 1 Cor. 1. 12. and ſay, that it is carnal. Dr. *Voetius* anſwers the aforeſaid Objection, as follows: 'The Apoſtle re-
'proves (ſays he) ſuch as made Sects, ſaying, *I am*
'*of Paul, and I of Apollos*— and we with him re-
'prove them. But this is far from being againſt the
'Choice, which one hath of Sermons and Preachers;
'ſeeing at one time we cannot hear all, neither
'doth the Explication and Application of all, equally
'ſuit ſuch a Perſon, in ſuch a Time, or Condition,
'or equally quicken, and ſubſerve the Encreaſe of
'Knowledge.' Thus far he.

Becauſe that the Apoſtle, in the aforeſaid Place, reproves an exceſſive Love to, or Admiration of particular Miniſters, accompanied with a ſinful Contention, Slighting and Diſdaining of others, who are truly godly, and with Sect-making: To ſay that from hence it neceſſarily follows, That we muſt make no Difference in our Choice, or in the Degrees of our Eſteem of different Miniſters, according to their different Gifts and Graces; is an Argument of as great Force, as to ſay, Becauſe Gluttony and Drunkenneſs are forbidden, therefore we muſt neither

ther eat nor drink, or make any Choice in Drinks or Victuals, let our Conſtitution be what it will.

Surely the very Nature of Chriſtian Love inclines thoſe that are poſſeſſed of it, to love others chiefly for their Goodneſs, and therefore in Proportion thereto. Now, ſeeing the Inference in the Objection is ſecretly built upon this Suppoſition, That we ſhould love all good Men alike; it ſtrikes at the Foundations of that Love to the Brethren, which is laid down in Scripture, as a Mark of true Chriſtianity, 1 *Joh.* 5. and ſo is carnal, with a Witneſs.

Again it may be objected, That the aforeſaid Practice tends to grieve our Pariſh-Miniſter, and to break Congregations in Pieces.

I anſwer, If our Pariſh-Miniſter be grieved at our greater Good, or prefers his Credit before it; then he has good Cauſe to grieve over his own Rottenneſs and Hypocriſie. And as for Breaking of Congregations to Pieces, upon the Account of People's Going from Place to Place, to hear the Word, with a View to get greater Good; that ſpiritual Blindneſs and Death, that ſo generally prevails, will put this out of Danger. It is but a very few, that have got any ſpiritual Reliſh; the moſt will venture their Souls with any Formaliſt, and be well ſatisfied with the ſapleſs Diſcourſes of ſuch dead Drones.

Well, doesn't the Apoſtle aſſert, That *Paul and Apollos are nothing?* Yes, it is true, they and all others are nothing as Efficient Cauſes; they could not change Men's Hearts. But were they nothing as Inſtruments? The Objection inſinuates one of theſe two Things, either that there is no Difference in Means, as to their Suitableneſs; or that there is no Reaſon to expect a greater Bleſſing upon the moſt ſuitable Means: Both which are equally abſurd, and before confuted.

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But it may be further objected, with great Appearance of Zeal, That what has been ſaid about People's Getting of Good, or greater Good, over their Pariſh-line, is a meer Fiction; for they are out of God's Way.

I anſwer, That there are Three monſtrous Ingredients in the Objection, namely, A Begging of the Queſtion in Debate, raſh Judging, and Limiting of God.

It is a mean Thing in Reaſoning, to beg or ſuppoſe that, which ſhould be prov'd, and then to reaſon from it. Let it be prov'd, that they are out of God's Way; and then I will freely yield: But till this be done, bold Sayſoes will not have much Weight with any but Dupes or Dunces. And for ſuch who cry out againſt others for Uncharitableneſs, to be guilty of it themſelves in the mean time in a very great Degree, is very inconſiſtent. Isn't it raſh to judge of Things they have never heard? But thoſe that have received Benefit, and are ſenſible of their own Uprightneſs, they will think it a light Thing, to be judged of Man's Judgment. Let *Tertullus* aſcend the Theatre, and gild the Objection with the moſt mellifluous Ciceronean Eloquence; it will no more perſwade them, that what they have felt is but a Fancy (unleſs they be under ſtrong Temptations of Satan, orſcared out of their Wits by frightful Expreſſions) than to tell a Man, in proper Language, that ſees, That it is but a Notion, he does not ſee: Or to tell a Man that feels Pleaſure or Pain, That it's but a deluded Fancy; they are quite miſtaken.

Beſides there is a Limiting the Holy One of Iſrael, in the aforeſaid Objection, which ſinful Sin the *Hebrews* were reproved for. It is a Piece of daring Preſumption, to pretend by our finite Line, to fathom the infinite Depths that are in the Being and Works

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of God. The Query of *Zophar* is juſt and reaſonable, *Job* 11.7,8. *Canſt thou by Searching find out GOD?*— The humble Apoſtle with Aſtoniſhment acknowledged, that the Ways of GOD were paſt finding out. *Rom.*11.33. Surely the Wind blows where it liſteth, and we cannot tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth. Doesn't JEHOVAH ride upon a gloomy Cloud? and make Darkneſs his Pavilion? and isn't his Path in the great Waters? *Pſ.*18. *Pſ.*77.19.

I would conclude my preſent Meditations upon this Subject, by Exhorting

All thoſe who enjoy a faithful Miniſtry, to a ſpeedy and ſincere Improvement of ſo rare and valuable a Privilege; leſt by their fooliſh Ingratitude the Righteous GOD be provok'd, to remove the Means they enjoy, or his Bleſſing from them, and ſo at laſt to expoſe them in another State to Enduring and greater Miſeries. For ſurely, theſe Sins which are committed againſt greater Light and Mercy, are more preſumptuous, ungrateful, and inexcuſable; there is in them a greater Contempt of GOD's Authority, and Slight of his Mercy; thoſe Evils do awfully violate the Conſcience, and declare a Love to Sin as Sin; ſuch Tranſgreſſors do ruſh upon the Boſſes of GOD's Buckler, they court Deſtruction without a Covering, and embrace their own Ruin with open Arms. And therefore according to the Nature of Juſtice, which proportions Sinners Pains, according to the Number and Heinouſneſs of their Crimes, and the Declaration of divine Truth, you muſt expect an enflamed Damnation: Surely, it ſhall be more tolerable for *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, in the Day of the LORD, than for you, except ye repent.

And let gracious Souls be exhorted, to expreſs the moſt tender Pity over ſuch as have none but Phariſee-Teachers; and that in the Manner before deſcribed:

ſcribed: To which let the Example of our LORD in the Text before us, be an inducing and effectual Incitement; as well as the gracious and immenſe Rewards, which follow upon ſo generous and noble a Charity, in this and the next State.

And let thoſe who live under the Miniſtry of dead Men, whether they have got the Form of Religion or not, repair to the Living, where they may be edified. Let who will, oppoſe it. What famous Mr. *Jenner* obſerves upon this Head, is moſt juſt, 'That if there be any godly Soul, or any that de-'ſires the Salvation of his Soul, and lives under a 'blind Guide, he cannot go out (of his Pariſh) 'without giving very great Offence; it will be 'tho't a Giddineſs, and a Slighting of his own Mi-'niſter at home. — When People came out of every 'Pariſh round about, to *John*, no Queſtion but 'this bred Heart-burning againſt *John*, ay, and 'Ill-will againſt thoſe People, that would not be 'ſatisfied with that Teaching they had in their own 'Synagogues.' Thus far he. But tho' your Neighbours growl againſt you, and reproach you for doing your Duty, in ſeeking your Souls Good; bear their unjuſt Cenſures with Chriſtian Meekneſs, and perſevere; as knowing that Suffering is the Lot of Chriſt's Followers, and that ſpiritual Benefits do infinitely overbalance all temporal Difficulties.

And O! that vacant Congregations would take due Care in the Choice of their Miniſters! Here indeed they ſhould haſten ſlowly. The Church of *Epheſus* is commended, for Trying them which ſaid they were Apoſtles, and were not; and for finding them Liars. Hypocrites are againſt all Knowing of others, and Judging, in order to hide their own Filthineſs; like Thieves they flee a Search, becauſe of their ſtolen Goods. But the more they endeavour

to

to hide, the more they expose their Shame. Does not the spiritual Man judge all Things? Tho' he cannot know the States of subtil Hypocrites infallibly; yet may he not give a near Guess, who are the Sons of *Sceva*, by their Manner of Praying, Preaching, and Living? Many Pharisee-Teachers have got a long fine String of Prayer by Heart, so that they are never at a Loss about it; their Prayers and Preachings are generally of a Length, and both as dead as a Stone, and without all Savour. I beseech you, my dear Brethren, to consider, That there is no Probability of your getting Good, by the Ministry of Pharisees. For they are no Shepherds (no faithful ones) in Christ's Account. They are as good as none, nay, worse than none, upon some Accounts. For take them first and last, and they generally do more Hurt than Good. They serve to keep better out of the Places where they live; nay, when the Life of Piety comes near their Quarters, they rise up in Arms against it, consult, contrive and combine in their Conclaves against it, as a common Enemy, that discovers and condemns their Craft and Hypocrisie. And with what Art, Rhetorick, and Appearances of Piety, will they varnish their Opposition of Christ's Kingdom? As the Magicians imitated the Works of *Moses*, so do false Apostles, and deceitful Workers, the Apostles of Christ.

I shall conclude this Discourse with the Words of the Apostle *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 11. 14, 15.

And no Marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an Angel of Light: Therefore it is no great Thing if his Ministers also be transformed as the Ministers of Righteousness; whose End shall be according to their Works.

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