
SENDING PREACHERS.

According to the Scriptures, the calling and sending of true preachers were performed in two ways; some were called by God alone, without any human instrumentality, as was the case with the prophets and apostles. Others were called through the medium of the pious, as may be seen from Acts 1: 23—26; 1 Tim. 3: 7. We hope no one will be so ignorant, who is otherwise of a candid and rational mind, but that he will know

that the whole Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testaments, were written for our instruction, admonition and correction; and that they are the true sceptre and rule by which the Lord's kingdom, house, church and congregation must be governed and adjusted, 2 Cor. 3: 16. Every thing contrary to Scripture, whether it be in doctrines, faith, sacraments, worship or conduct, should be measured by this infallible rule, and de-

molished by this just and divine sceptre, without any respect to persons, and brought to nothing. Therefore would we, your willing servants and associates, of like mortal nature with you, each one in the office and station to which he is called, humbly admonish you, in all love, that you would reflect on the salvation of your immortal souls, and would rightly examine the *sending* or *calling*, the doctrine and conduct of the bishops, pastors and preachers of your churches. Examine them by the aid of the spirit of the Lord, and by the doctrines and customs of the apostles, because you have persecuted and destroyed so many pious, godly christians, by the idols' houses of the ungodly, which are supported by the bloody havoc-cries of the learned. Yea, we doubt not, but that if you follow our advice with a sincere heart, you will soon perceive, that we, miserable men, do nothing more in this matter, than the word of God teaches and enjoins; and that your preachers are not the servants of Christ, but hirelings, hypocrites, deceivers and mockers, concerning whom the Scriptures warn us, on every side, and represent them under many evil names. John 10: 12; Matt. 3: 4.

Candid reader! let this be to you a true and unwavering rule, that all who rightly preach Christ and his word, and thereby bring forth obedient children to the Lord, must have been called through one of the aforementioned means. They must have been brought into the vineyard of the Lord, through the true and unfeigned love of God and man, through the power of the Holy Ghost. They must improve the talent of grace which they have received from God, they must rebuke sin, and teach faith and righteousness, without any respect of person, they must set forth the word and praise of the Lord; they must faithfully perform the work and service of the Lord and bring the gathered sheaves into his barn and the acquired wealth into his treasury. Such a shepherd was the faithful Moses; for when the Lord informed him that Israel had made a molten calf, he hastened from the mountain, and when he heard the tumult and saw the multitude playing, and dancing, a provoked zeal burned in his heart, so that he cast down and brake the stone tables

which the Lord had written with his own finger. He cared neither for life nor death, but rushed forth among the idolatrous people, and rebuked them by his word and by the sword, because they gave to a molten creature the honor of Almighty God, who with such love gloriously effected their deliverance from Egypt, Exod. 32: 7.

When Zacharias, the son of Barachias, a man full of the Holy Ghost, saw the false worship of the people, he hazarded his life, and stood forth for the honor of the Lord. He rebuked his brethren, erring Israel, and said, "Why transgress ye the commandments of the Lord, that ye cannot prosper?" 2 Chron. 24: 20.

Also the worthy prophet Jeremiah was burdened with much suffering and cares. He was much troubled on account of his faithful services, and had determined in his heart to prophesy no more in the name of the Lord; but when he saw that the people were ungodly and neither acted nor spoke aright, he said, "God's word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing and I could not stay," Jer. 20: 9.

Again, also holy Paul says, "Wo is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me," 1 Cor. 9: 16.

Behold, my good reader, all who by such a power are touched in their hearts, who are moved by the Holy Ghost, who are pressed by love to God and man, and urged by the Lord himself, or by his spotless christian church; or are called to the service of the Lord by an unblamable, truly believing, christian church, to rightly teach in the house of God; that is, the church of Jesus Christ, with sound doctrine, and by a pious and unblamable conduct, admonish, rebuke, reprove and comfort them in paternal love; to set forth and administer the Lord's holy baptism and Supper, in a right manner; to repel diligently, with God's word, all deluding and false teachers; and to exclude all evil members from the communion of the godly, &c. To such, the word of Christ is, As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you; without such a sending, no one can ever rightly preach the gospel, as Paul says,

“How shall they preach except they be sent?”

Yes, it was with this sending and calling that all the prophets, apostles and servants of God came forth. They assumed not the honor to themselves, as do the preachers of this world: but like Aaron, they were called by God, or, as has been said, by the spotless church. They were brought by the spirit of God, with pious hearts, into his service; they had always esteemed themselves unfit to serve the people of God, or stand forth in such a high and responsible station.

When Moses was called of the Lord, that he might lead out the people, he refused from his heart, he excused himself and declined, because he was of a slow tongue; he desired not the office to which the Lord had chosen him, yea, he resisted so long that the Lord was angry, *Exod. 4: 10—15*.

Isaiah was confounded because he was to preach the word of the Lord. He lamented that he was of unclean lips till the angel purged them with a coal from off the holy altar, *Isa. 6: 6*.

Jeremiah was called and prepared from his birth of God, to be a prophet; he said, Ah Lord God! I am not fit to preach, for I am but a child, *Jer. 1: 6*.

Peter was asked by the Lord three times, if he loved him, before he gave him charge of his sheep, *John 21: 15*.

Paul was called from heaven, and appointed by the Lord himself in the service of the Gospel; for the Lord chose him as suitable for the ministry, *Acts 9: 3*.

Matthias was chosen through the zealous prayers of the church, and the lots of the apostles, to be an apostle in the place of Judas, *Acts 1: 26*.

All who are not sent of God, nor by an unblamable christian church, conformably to the regulations of Christ and the apostles are not called, as above said. Such are not called by the Holy Ghost; by the pure, unfeigned love of God and their brethren; and with a correct knowledge and zeal for the divine word; but they enter upon it with a temporal, sensual life, seeking man's favor, praise, money and profit. They will never gather fruit in the vineyard of the Lord, though they may be learned in language,

eloquent and esteemed as great and excellent men. But all that they attempt is lost labor. They will rise too early, or go out too late, their calling is powerless, their service is vain, their labor without fruit, yea, it is nothing but sowing by the way, and beating against the wind; for no one can serve in this high and holy office, conformably to God's will, except those whom the Lord of the vineyard has made worthy and fit, by the spirit of his grace.

Since then, this sending is the true sending and calling, which is taught in the Scriptures, as has been observed, we faithfully counsel the reader, that in the pure fear of God, he would mark what kind of people their teachers are; of whom, in what way, and to what they are called. For it is manifest that some of them are useless, haughty, lustful men; some are avaricious, usurers, liars, deceivers, others again are drunkards, gamblers, licentious, open seducers, idolaters, &c., concerning whom it stands written, If they repent not, they shall not inherit the kingdom of God, *1 Cor. 6: 9, 10*. Some also, are idle profligates, young and haughty, wholly unlearned in the Scriptures; and were anointed and shaven by anti-christ, when they obtain a little knowledge of the Latin tongue, like as if the qualifications for the ministry and for the care of our souls, were not to be founded upon godliness and the gifts of grace, but upon language; Oh no, my reader, no, their foundation must be sought for more deeply.

Besides this, those so chosen, desire nothing but a sensual, corrupt, carnal life, dishonest, filthy lucre and benefices, which heretofore anti-christ and his servants have collected together and multiplied by means of sorcery, theft and robbery.*

They are only called by carnal love, favor and faction; one has a son, another a brother, a third a favored friend, a fourth is made willing by money and gifts.

They are also with a similar spirit installed and established in their office; to wit, with eating, drinking, gormandizing and luxury; with pompous greeting, choir letters, appellations, presentations, investitures, and such like anti-christian titles.

* That is what the priests seek.

But by whom are they thus called? By the church? No. Christ's church knows no such callings, customs, practices and teachers, but they are called by the assemblies of the impenitent, the haughty, avaricious, fornicators, gamblers, drunkards and idolaters, who neither know God nor his word, but who abuse, persecute and hate all christian truth, and walk after the lusts of the flesh.*

Again, to what are they called? That they may preach the pure word of God? That they may go before the poor people, with doctrines and conduct consistent with the commands of Scripture? O no; but that they may teach the doctrines and commandments of men; that they may withstand the holy truth, and betray the pious and godly, who refrain from the broadway, into the hands of the blood-thirsty; and in this manner assiduously serve and support the dominion of hell.

My beloved reader, why shall I complain so much; it is yet much worse than I can write. One blind man calls another; one idolater another; one ungodly man, another. It is, as the prophet said, deceivers, liars, drunkards, and gluttons are good prophets for this people, Mich. 2: 11.

O sensual preachers! You who with Korah, Dathan and Abiram ran uncalled, particularly you who know that your calling and conduct are not of the word and Spirit of God, judge your hearts by the word of the Lord, fear his rigid punishment and severe sentence, and reflect how the aforementioned persons, for the same reason, were fearfully destroyed by the Lord before all Israel, Num. 16: 32.

It suits perverted fleshly ease to live in voluptuousness here upon earth, with fattened bodies, with gloves on the hands, with ostentatious show, to be greeted by men as doctor, lord and master. But when the messenger of death shall knock at the door of your souls and say, "give an account," you will no longer remain as stewards and hirelings; then you must appear before the throne of the eternal Majesty, and the poor miserable souls which you have led out of the true way of Christ, with your lying mouths, your unbelieving, blind hearts, sen-

sual, corrupt bodies, false and deceiving doctrine, idolatries, sorceries, and ungodly wanton lives. O where will you conceal yourselves from the wrath of God? Then shall you cry, O ye mountains fall upon us, and ye hills cover us, Rev. 6: 16. O then you will know what kind of calling you had; what kind of life you led, that you served no other God than your belly, the devil, and your selfish evil flesh, that you came uncalled, that you have sought nothing but the milk, wool and flesh of the sheep, and that one blind man has led another, till both have fallen into the abyss of the eternal wrath of Almighty God, and the torments of hell.

O precious souls awake and fear God, for the hour draws near that your momentary laugh will be changed into an everlasting weeping; these short lived joys to eternal pain, and this easy, carnal life to death and endless wo. Jude says, "Wo unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core." Again, to them "is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever," Jude 1: 11, 13.

Behold, beloved sirs, friends and brethren, we openly declare that the sending and calling of your preachers are neither of God nor his word, but are from anti-christ, the dragon and the beast; that they are not called to preach the word of the Lord, by the Spirit of God, and the church, but they are called and urged by their lusts with the priests of Jeroboam, to worship the golden calf, 2 Chron. 13: 8, 9. They enter not in by the right door, therefore, the Scriptures testify that they are thieves and robbers, John 10: 8.

Since then, we have been saved out of the mouths of the lions and bears of the pit, and out of the snares of concealed thieves and robbers, through the great Shepherd of the sheep, the High Priest of our souls, Christ Jesus, and are now upon the chosen and fruitful mountain of Israel, and the green luxuriant pastures of the holy word (the Lord be eternally thanked), our hungering consciences have been fed with the food of eternal life, it must ever be a condemnable folly to forsake such a true shep-

* Observe by whom the priests are chosen.

herd, and such precious pastures, and again enter upon the barren and waste deserts, under the false shepherd who does nothing else but rob and deprive God of his glory, and ruin and murder our poor miserable souls, John 10: 10.

This I have said particularly in relation

to the *Popish priests*. What the calling and sending of the Lutherans and Zuinglians is, by what spirit they are moved, what they seek, and what fruits of repentance they show by their doctrines and sacraments, we willingly leave all the godly to judge.
