

THE DOCTRINE OF THE PREACHERS.

As I have presented to the reader, the first part in relation to the sending and calling of a true preacher, according to the word of God, I will now, through the grace of God, present in like manner the second part, relating to the doctrine; for there is but little difference between their calling and their doctrine, as the calling is, even so, most commonly, is the doctrine.

Where the spirit of God urges or moves to preach, there will the word be incorruptibly taught in the power of God; and upright children of the spirit will thereby be born. But where flesh and blood calls, there will a carnal doctrine be taught and carnal disciples will be made, for that like produces like is incontrovertible. I deem it unnecessary here to prove this with much scripture, for their actions bear testimony.

The Scriptures plainly show how a preacher rightly called by the word of God is to rightly teach that word without perverting glosses, without any mingling of leaven; as Peter says, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God," 1 Peter 4: 11. They are the children of the Holy Ghost who speak the word of the Spirit, as Christ said, "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you," Matt. 10: 20. "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God," John 3: 34. To preach the word salutarily and unblamably, is one of the highest and greatest commands enjoined by Christ. He said, "Go ye in all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," Mark 16: 15.

✓ The Gospel, the word of God, preached unmingled, in the power of the spirit, is the

only right, true seed from which are born the truly believing and obedient children of God. If the church of Christ brings forth children from the doctrine of man, and not from God's word, she is not faithful unto Christ, and her children are not of his seed.

Therefore may nothing else be preached in Christ's kingdom and house, the church, except her King and husband's own commands and words, according to which she and all her servants must conform.

This command and word (I say), Christ commanded all true messengers and preachers to observe, as he spoke; *Preach the gospel*. He does not say, preach the doctrines and commands of man; preach councils and customs; preach glossy ordinances and opinions of the learned, but he says, "Preach the gospel," and "teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," Matt. 28: 20.

My faithful reader, observe that all the true servants of God, both of the Old and New Testaments, taught nothing but God's word, as may be seen and read in many places in the Scriptures.

Moses was found faithful of God in all his house. He regulated and taught nothing which God had not before commanded him, Num. 12: 7; Heb. 3: 2.

Isaiah, and all of the other prophets, testified in many places what kind of doctrine they taught, and from whom they had received it; and said, Thus saith the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt; thus spake the Lord of Hosts, Again the mouth of the Lord has spoken it. Paul dare not speak of any thing which

Christ had not wrought through him, Rom. 15: 18. Yea, Christ himself did not teach *his* word, but the word of his father, he said, My doctrine is not mine, but is of him who sent me, "All things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you," John 7: 16; 15: 15. Since then the true messengers of God, taught nothing but the word of the Lord, which is the only doctrine from which our souls can obtain eternal life, as the Lord said, Deut. 8: 3. So it is easily here to mark and judge what kind of teachers they are who direct the poor uncultivated people to legends, histories, fables, holydays, images, holy water, tapers, palms, confessions, pilgrimages, masses, matins and vespers; who teach of purgatory, vigils, times, bulls, offerings, and satisfaction for souls and sins, who also make a piece of bread and a drink of wine, to be the essential body and blood of Christ; who teach and say that when they have but spoken these words, *Hoc est corpus meum* (*this is my body*), the Lord, willing or not willing, must descend unto their idolatrous hands, even though the Heavens should rend assunder, and the earth crumble down, O blasphemy!

O dear Lord! my heart trembles in my body, that I must relate and mention such terrible abominations. But because the simple plain people, who do not guard themselves against such seducers; who, conscientiously, are bound hand and foot, and are blindly rushed into eternal death, and the abyss of hell, by these useless men, therefore I cannot remain silent, but must disclose this, through undissembled love to God and your souls. Who knows but God may give grace that you may be prevailed upon to hear, your eyes opened to see, and your hearts to understand, that you may be freed from the snares of the devil, whereby you are taken.

Yes, my dear reader, they have made lords, princes, and the world drunk by their cup, Rev. 17: 2, and have completely bewitched them, so that all who turn from their shame, and would not pervert the honor of their Savior, by a piece of bread, all who shun false teachers, and desire the salutary administration of the Lord's Supper, as above said, will be upbraided by all

men, as profaners of the holy Sacrament, and they must suffer and be banished, as degraded and accursed heretics.

O blind leader! you, who during your life have not rightly understood one sentence of the word of the Lord, nor have received one ray from his spirit, but have trodden the kingdom of God with your feet, and have thrust it from you with your horns, Ezek. 34: 21. How truly are you associates of those of whom it stands written, that they say, "We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us; for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves," Isa. 28: 15; again, "Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness," Isa. 5: 20. "Wo unto you, for ye shut up the kingdom of Heaven against men," said Christ, Matt. 23: 13, and make the poor souls err from the way. Yet again, Wo unto you!

However, I am not much astonished that such persons teach such shameful doctrine, since they have neither known Christ nor his word, but they hold and teach all things as they were taught from youth up, out of the old usages, and the papistical laws. But that which grieves me most, is, that those also who now are aware in part of the hidden whoredom of the Babylonian woman, and have put from them some of her abominations, yet cling to human sophistry, so that they can neither be moved nor taught, with the powerful word of God, with the unblamable lives, the candid professions, or the innocent blood of so many godly saints. Nevertheless, some of you, have, at times, to yield to the truth with stopped mouths and subdued hearts, but still ye cease not to upbraid, defame, and belie, with envious tongues and slanderous lips, the bright, clear truth of Christ, and the pious children of God, before your carnal, blind churches which are of like calling with yourselves. This also your writers do as may be seen and heard every where. Besides, I fear that they are not less guilty than the papists in moving the lords, princes and ruling powers, by commissions, complaints, revilings, outeries, and writ-

ings, to persecute the Lamb of God, and his chosen, Rev. 17: 6; and to cause an uproar, when their deceiving leaven, particularly the calf worship of their infant baptism, and their unfounded supper, is rejected. Let each one behold for himself and learn to know them rightly. I know of a truth that they are without the Spirit, the sending, or the word of Christ; for I am sensible how malicious they generally are toward those who are rightly led, who fear the Lord with all their heart and who would gladly become christians. In their doctrines and deeds they seek, not less than the papists, friendship of man, honor, pomp, bounties, fine houses, and an easy licentious life.

O my beloved reader, these are not the teachers who lead many to righteousness, and who shall shine, as the light of heaven and as the stars, now and in eternity, Dan. 12: 13. For I know not where a single congregation shall be found which they have led with their doctrines and conduct to repenting lives, and to the worship of God. Their great clamor is against the pope and his cardinals, bishops, priests and monks. Moreover, all those who gladly seek the best for their poor souls, must be upbraided by them, as profaners of the sacraments, anabaptists, fanatics, and heretics, who through the word of God, reprove their deceiving doctrines, idolatrous sacraments, and idle lives.

Yea, when they can find but one (though cut off), who was before united with the people of God, but who has now fallen into some vice, they judge and sentence *all* the godly by this *one*; Behold! say they, what manner of people they are. They seek nothing so much as to find cause of censure; therefore, they look upon Judas, but not upon Peter, Andrew and John; they do not regard what manner of people they are themselves, nor what kind of disciples they have.

Besides, it is nothing but the grace, favor, mercy, and the love of God, that they teach and preach to their covetous, proud, gorgeous, impure, drunken, and impenitent church, not observing that such as they are, cannot inherit the kingdom of God, as the whole Scriptures testify; they also strenght-

en the hands of the wicked, so that no one repents of his wickedness, as the prophet lamented.

O ye useless unprofitable teachers, who are believed to bear the vessels of the Lord, these my words are to you! Why do you declaim so much of faith and love, whose fruit you so greatly hate and dislike? If you have the fear and unfeigned love of God, let them appear and be made manifest through your words. Say, beloved preachers! Where is your christian humility, your godly, christian zeal, pleasure, peace and joy in Christ Jesus?

Where is your mercy which you shew? where are the naked whom you have clothed, the hungry whom you have fed, and the needy whom you have entertained? Matt. 25: 41—43. Where are the lost whom you have again sought, the wounded whom you have bound up, and the sick whom you have healed? Ezek. 34: 4. Where is your unblamable, pious life which is from God? That which you preach, perform and do, is for the most part idle hypocrisy.

Some of you approve in some degree, of a pious, christian life, preach also much of Christ, of his merits, spirit and grace, and are yourselves, manifestly those who lead a gross, carnal life, who crucify Christ anew, grieve his spirit, and despise his grace, as may be seen.

O preachers, preachers! how aptly has the Holy Ghost likened you to dry wells and empty clouds from which no water can be obtained, and to unfruitful trees from which no fruit can be taken, 2 Pet. 2: 17; Jude 1: 12. I know not to what you may be more suitably compared, than to a woman who lives in all manner of shame and wantonness, and yet talks much about modesty, decency and virtue: Should not her words be regarded as mockery? Might it not be said, why do you talk of modesty and chastity, since you are full of all manner of immodesty and shame?

We are well aware that you have demolished some of the little idols of Babylon, such as the Roman ablution, the invocation of departed saints, vile purification, abstaining from meats, and the like self-righteousness, idolatry, and other superstitions, but, alas, the horrible blasphemy and abom-

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inations are still retained; such as accursed unbelief, obstinacy, earthly-mindedness, unscriptural infant baptism, the idolatrous supper, and the impenitent, old life which is of the flesh.

Therefore, we testify with the truth and declare that you are not ambassadors of God nor teachers of Christ. For it is plain that you reject the word and ordinances of the Lord, and run of yourselves, Jer. 8: 6, and have pastured yourselves under the name and appearance of the evangelical shepherds of the Lord, and have led to destruction so many hundreds of thousands of souls, through your wanton doctrine, idolatrous sacraments, and carnal lives.

But the teachers who are sent of God, and who have been rightly called, teach the word of God in purity, abide in its holy ordinances, and live (after their weakness) unblamably, for they are born of God, and are taught and moved by his Holy Spirit, they seek neither gold, nor possessions, neither an easy life nor earthly applause, they wait upon their enjoined duties with all earnestness, they fear God from the heart, seek their neighbor with fidelity; they are armed with the weapons of righteousness, on the right hand and on the left, Rom. 6: 7. They deal without respect to persons. The powerful, sharp sword of the divine word, cuts out of their mouth; it is a shining lantern in their hands; they are taught in righteousness, are full of all spiritual wisdom; they divide the good from the evil; the holy from the unholy, and the clean from the unclean. In short, they shine in doctrine and conduct, even as from the beginning till the present time, it has been written and remarked of all true prophets, apostles and servants of God.

O dear Lord, how lovely are those pastors and teachers who seek nothing else but the extension of the kingdom of God; who rightly preach the word of repentance and grace, that they may win many souls; and for this end, they expose their reputation, houses, property, persons and lives.

These are they, who, with Christ, the chief shepherd, gather together and feed his lambs; but the others are those who scatter and destroy them. They are prophets, but not of God; they preach, but not out of the

Lord's mouth. They strengthen the hands of the ungodly. They destroy the souls who should have eternal life, and encourage those who must forever die; and this they do for handfuls of barley and pieces of bread. They preach to the people peace when there is no peace. Therefore, shall they stand in shame, who follow such abominations, although they yet are not ashamed and yet forbear to blush, Ezek. 13: 16.

Behold, dear reader, since they so shamefully deprive Christ of his honor and gain, and scatter his sheep, and, with the sword of their deceiving doctrines, destroy the poor souls who are so greatly loved by the Lord, for whom he so earnestly seeks, and whom he so dearly purchased. Since they so enviously war against the word and ordinances of the Lord, we say and teach with Christ, "Let them alone; they be blind leaders of the blind." Guard yourselves against such false prophets; for though they come in the appearance of sheep, they are nevertheless, inwardly ravening wolves. They are the strangers whose voice Christ's sheep know not. They are those of whom Paul warns us and says, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned; and avoid them; for they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple," Rom. 16: 17, 18.

Again, John says, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed, for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds," 2 John 1: 9, 10, 11.

The word of God, abundantly exhorts us that we should leave such and beware of them; shun their voice and retreat from them, and not take them into our houses, as has been said. If we are Christ's sheep and the children of the Holy Spirit; so must we even hear Christ's voice, and follow after and obey the monitions of the Holy Ghost. Reflect how sincerely holy Paul admonished the Philippians, that they should guard against strife, evil doers, and the concision.

He taught the true servants of God that they should shun those, who failed no further (as it appears) than that they out of zeal, without knowledge, held fast to the circumcision which they had received from their fathers, and would not admit that it should be abolished through Christ, for this he sharply re-	proves them. How much more earnestly it becomes us to beware of them, who deceive the whole world, who upbraid and persecute the godly, and crucify all truth, against all false teachers and blasphemers of God, who urge, institute and practice all manner of idolatrous and abominable doctrine.
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