

TO ALL BISHOPS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND PRIESTS IN CHRISTENDOM

To measure themselves by the scriptures of truth, and see if they are not reprov'd by them, and the Spirit from where they came.

And to all that call themselves papists, bishops, ministers and teachers of the gospel; Christendom's (so called), who say they do not have the same power and spirit the apostles had.

—By George Fox

Read and try with patience, and be not offended at truth.

He that has the form of Godliness, and denies the power thereof, from such turn away. 2 *Tim* 3:5

Woe unto the rebellious children, said the Lord, that take counsel, but not of me, and cover with a covering, but not with my spirit, that they may add sin unto sin. *Isa* 30:1

*Let his dwelling place be desolate, and let no one live in it;
Let another take his office.' Acts 1:20*

If you acknowledge God, Christ, and the prophets and apostles, whom God chose and sent to speak, and whom Christ chose and sent to preach, and if you acknowledge what they were sent to declare against; should those same things now be held up, [continued, and overlooked]? Are teachers, who overlook such things, to be recognized by their fruits; so that we would recognize such teachers? Are such things not to be cried against in these our ages, just as the prophets and apostles cried against them in their ages?

Such as were the sons of Eli, and Eli not restraining his sons, but honored his sons above God; therefore the Lord said, 1 *Sam* 2:31-34, 'He would cut off his arm, and the arm of his father's house; and this should be the sign unto him, that he would cut off his sons in one day.' So Eli the priest lost his two sons, lost his life, lost the ark of God, and lost the priesthood; and therefore said the Lord 'I will stir up a faithful priest that shall do according to my heart and mind, (namely, Samuel), and all that is left in Eli's house shall come and bow down to him for a piece of silver, and a morsel of bread.'

Here was the judgments of God upon the unruly and unfaithful priests, as in the first of *Sam 2*.

And when Samuel was old, he made his sons judges over Israel, and his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre [money], and took rewards, and perverted judgment, which grieved the good people, and Samuel, which brought judgments afterwards upon them. And Samuel said unto all Israel, in 1 *Sam 12:3-5*, 'Behold, here I am, bear record of me before the Lord; whose ox have I taken? Or whose ass have I taken? Or whom have I done wrong unto? Or whom have I hurt? Or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith, and I will restore it to you again?' Then they said, 'You have done us no wrong, nor hurt us, neither have you taken anything of any man's hands,' ... Samuel said unto them, 'The Lord is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that you have found no blame in my hands,' and they answered, 'He is witness.'

Now, can you priests of Christendom say, as Samuel said here in truth in his old age, and the people say so of you, as they said here of Samuel, and cleared Samuel, saying, 'Let the Lord be witness,' come try yourselves by this scripture; and by the prophets' example.'

'And Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, went after Naaman for a reward, and when he came to him, he asked him whether all was well, and he said to him, all was well, then said Gehazi, my master Elisha has sent me, saying, behold there be come to me even now from Ephraim, two young men of the children of the prophets, give them, I pray you, a talent of silver, and two changes of raiment; and Naaman gave him two talents of silver, and two changes of raiment; and so Gehazi, laid them in his house, and came and stood before Elisha, and Elisha said unto him, whence comest you? And he said, your servant went nowhere, and he said unto him, did not my heart go with you [and see], when the man turned again from his chariot to meet you? Is this a time to take money, and to receive garments, and olives, and vineyards, and sheep and oxen, and men-servants, and maid-servants? Then Elisha said to his servant Gehazi, the leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto you, and unto your seed forever; and he went out from his presence, a leper white as snow,' mark you priests this, and whether the cause of this leprosy of Gehazi does not stick and remain upon you who are of his spirit.

Now Elisha had healed this Naaman of his leprosy, and Naaman would have given Elisha a reward, and Elisha affirmed he would not receive it, when Naaman would have constrained him to have received it, but Elisha refused it; and Naaman would have given Elisha's servant something, but Elisha would not suffer him to give his servant anything, yet greedy covetous Gehazi his servant

run after him with a lie in his mouth, and received his rewards, and received thereby the leprosy to himself and his seed forever.

And therefore take heed of Gehazi's leprosy in running after gifts and rewards, you papists and priests, and other teachers, and mind also the nobleness of the spirit which was in Elisha, who refused all Naaman's gifts and rewards, and would not allow his servant to take any neither, *2 Kings* 5. Such was the envy of some, that would have taken off Elisha's head, but the Lord prevented them, as in *2 Kings* 7, and the unbelieving prince was trampled to death, according as Elisha prophesied to him.

And as Elisha went through Bethel, the children mocked him, and two bears came out of the forest and tore in pieces two and forty of their children; therefore take heed, all you mockers and people, how you suffer your children and yourselves to mock the prophets of God, who do what they do freely. *2 Kings* 2: 24. And in *Isa* 56 the Lord God sent him to cry against the watchmen, and the shepherds, and were not these such as pretended to watch for people's souls, and to feed them, think you?

The Lord said, which gathereth the scattered of Israel, 'yet will I gather to them, those that are to be gathered to them,' all you beasts of the field come to devour, yes all the beasts of the forest, [mark,] their watchmen are all blind, [mark,] all blind, strange watchmen to be all blind, they have no knowledge, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark, they lie and sleep, and delight in sleeping, and these greedy dogs can never have enough, and these shepherds cannot understand; for they all look for their own way, everyone for his gain from his quarter, and say, 'come, I will bring wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink, and to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.'

Now, are such watchmen and such shepherds as these to be held up, or to be justified in our days, which the prophet cried against, he says, 'they are all blind,' and calls them 'all greedy dumb dogs, who look for their own advantage, and seek their gain from their quarter,' and may not such be so called as do so now, as you may see in *Isa* 56:10-11.

And Isaiah said, *Isa* 55:1-2, 'Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, and you who have no silver, buy and eat; come, I say, buy wine and milk without silver and without price; why do you lay out your silver and not for bread, and your labor without being satisfied? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat that which is good, let your souls delight in fatness, incline your ears unto me; hear, and your souls shall live.' So **the souls do not live without inclining the ears, and coming unto the Lord, and hearing him.**

Now these shepherds and blind watchmen, which were called the greedy dumb dogs that could never have enough, they were of another spirit than Isaiah was of, who may get the form of the true prophets' words, but not in the power and spirit that they were in, as many are now.

And in *Jer* 5:29-31 and in the latter part of the chapter, 'shall I not visit for these things,' said the Lord, 'shall not my soul be avenged of such a nation as this? A horrible and filthy thing is committed in the land, the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests preach for hire, or bear rule by their means, and my people love to have it so, what will you do in the end thereof?'

And now people consider, is not this a filthy horrible thing committed in the land now, which Jeremiah the prophet cried against then? And Jeremiah wept over such, and said, 'Oh! that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, ... for they bend their tongues like bows for lies, but they have no courage for truth.' *Jer* 9:1-3.

And again, in *Jer* 10:21, 'For the pastors are become beasts, and have not sought the Lord, therefore have they no understanding, and all the flocks of their pastures are scattered;' measure yourselves therefore, you pastors of this age with those pastors, and try and see if you are out of their steps.

And in *Jer* 13:13-14. There you may see how the priests, and the false prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and of the land, how that they were filled with drunkenness, ... and how the Lord 'dashed them one against another;' and further see the false prophets in *Jer* 14, 'thus said the Lord, the prophets' prophecy lies in my name, for I have not sent them, neither did I command them, neither did I speak to them, but they prophesy unto you a false vision, and divination, and vanity, and the deceitfulness of their own hearts. Therefore, thus said the Lord, concerning the prophets that prophesy in my name, and I have not sent them; despite their saying that sword and famine will not be in the land, by sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed, and the people to whom these prophets prophesy shall be cast out into the streets of Jerusalem, because of the famine and the sword, and there shall be none to bury them, both they and their wives, and sons, and their daughters. I will pour out their wickedness upon them.' So see what judgments came upon these flattering false prophets, and the people that set them up, and do you think, that those who hold up such false prophets in our days, or the false prophets, can escape the hand of the Lord? Do not many now prophesy and preach in the name of the Lord, that the Lord has never sent, nor commanded, nor spoken to them? No, do not they say in plain words that there is no hearing of his voice now days? So, how could the Lord possibly have sent them then; what can they preach or prophesy? They can only preach a false vision, and a divination, and vanity and deceitfulness of their own hearts, now as then. And so the true preacher must

have a command from God to preach and must have heard God's voice; the true prophets and preachers that he sends, who deny those who spoke from their own mind, as Jeremiah did then.

When Pashur the son of Immer the priest, heard Jeremiah prophesy these things, he smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were in the high gate of Benjamin, on the morrow Pashur brought Jeremiah out of the stocks, then said Jeremiah unto him, 'the Lord has not called your name Pashur, but Magor Missabib,' which by interpretation is fear round about; 'and you Pashur, and all that dwelleth in your house shall go into captivity, and you shall come to Babylon, and there shall you die, and be buried, and all your friends to whom you have prophesied lies:' so there was the end of the false prophet and his friends, see in *Jer* 20:1-6 and take heed you priests of Christendom of this, that breed up your sons in the way of the false prophets, who were strikers and persecutors of the true.

'Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture said the Lord; therefore, thus said the Lord God of Israel unto the pastors that feed my people, you have scattered my flocks and thrust them out, and have not visited them; behold I will visit you for the wickedness of your works, said the Lord, and I will gather the remnant of my sheep out of all countries, where I had driven them, and will bring them again to their fold, and they shall grow and increase, and I will set up shepherds over them to feed them, and they shall dread no more,' *Jer* 23:1-4. So here the Lord is the gatherer of his sheep unto his fold, which the false shepherds have scattered and thrust them out of, whom the Lord will visit; mark you this, you papists, priests, and pastors of Christendom, that are found in the work of the false, and give over eating the sour grapes, and setting your teeth on edge against God's sheep, that are gathered into his fold.

And the Lord said, 'I have seen the foolishness of the prophets of Samaria, that prophesied in Baal, and caused my people to err;' and further the Lord said, 'I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem, **filthiness and adultery, and walking in lies, they strengthen also the hands of the wicked,**' [mark,] that none can return from his wickedness, 'they are all unto me as Sodom,' says the Lord, those were sad prophets 'and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah;' sad people, sad professors. So measure yourselves you priests and shepherds, and people now days with these, and try whether you are in their steps or not? Therefore, 'thus said the Lord of hosts concerning the prophets, I will feed them with wormwood, and will make them drink the water of gall, for from the prophets of Jerusalem, (which was the highest place of worship), is wickedness gone forth into all the land:' now this is the food the Lord will feed them withal. So mark, this is to be your food, who are found in their steps and practice, you priests in Christendom.

Again, 'thus said the Lord God of hosts, hear not the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you, and teach you vanity, and speak the vision of their own hearts, and not from the mouth of the Lord;' and here it is clear we are not to hear such as do not speak out from the mouth of the Lord which is God's command; and is it not said, that no one has anything from the mouth of the Lord these days, and there is no hearing of his voice?

Moreover the Lord said, 'I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran, I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesy, but if they had stood in my counsel, and had declared my words to the people, then they would have turned them from their evil way, and the wickedness of their inventions.'

And now here you may see what is the cause that people are not turned from their evil ways, and from their wicked inventions, because the prophets run and God never sent them, and speak, and he never spoke to them, and stand not in the council of God. Now might not those false prophets say, 'we have the words of the Lord which Moses and the prophets spoke,' as you now say that you have the words that Christ and the apostles spoke, yet not from the mouth of the Lord? So would not the true prophets have reproved you, who are found in the false prophets' practice? [Quoting the Bible, is not speaking words that God has commanded or supplied.]

'I have heard said the Lord, what the prophets said that prophesy lies in my name, saying I have dreamed a dream.' Mark, yet without being sent or told what to say, they go in God's name, and use his name, as do all the false ministers, who God never sent nor spoke unto.

But said the Lord, 'how long do the prophets delight to prophesy lies, even prophesying of the deceit of their own hearts; think they to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams, which they tell every man to his neighbor as their forefathers have forgotten my name?' So it is but the deceit of their own hearts, and a dream, if it is not from the mouth of the Lord, though they may run and tell it in the name of the Lord; 'but the prophet that has a dream, let him tell his dream, and he that has my word, let him speak my word faithfully; what is the chaff to the wheat, said the Lord? is not my word even like a fire, said the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the stone? and therefore said the Lord, behold I will come against the prophets that steal *my* word, everyone from his neighbor.' [Mark,] *that steal God's words*, and therefore consider all you prophets and teachers, who do not speak from the mouth of the Lord; do not you steal God's words from your neighbor? Will not the Lord come against you? For do not you all steal his words, you who do not have not the word from the Lord's mouth? Then are not you all chaff? 'behold said the Lord, I will come against the prophets which use their tongues, and say, he [the Lord] said it.'

Oh! Is not this deceit? Are not many found in this practice? Try yourselves though your tongues, and let your salaries blind your eyes.

'And behold, said the Lord, I will come against the prophets that prophesy false dreams, and to tell them, and cause the people to err by their lies, and by their flatteries, and I sent them not, said the Lord, nor commanded them; therefore they bring no profit to this people, said the Lord.' And therefore, it is clear those that God commands not, nor sends, bring not profit to the people then, nor now; but they feed the people up with flatteries and with lies, therefore examine yourselves, and your fruits; for the wickedness of these false prophets, and priests and pastors, and such as followed and held them up, '**I will bring**, said the Lord, upon them an **everlasting reproach and perpetual shame that shall never be forgotten**, Jer 23:40. Do you think, that if you that are found in their practises, that these things will be forgotten of the Lord, and that he will not visit you for the same? Though the Lord sent unto them his prophets and servants rising up early, but they would not hear, nor incline their ears to obey, but inclined their ears after those false prophets, priests and pastors; is it not so now? Examine yourselves by the scripture.

'Then spoke the priests and the prophets unto the princes, that Jeremiah is worthy to die, and he told them, if they put him to death they would bring innocent blood upon themselves, and upon their city, and upon the inhabitants thereof; for of a truth the Lord has sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears;' and this stopped them from putting him to death, as you may see in *Jer 26:11-16*

And some of the elders said, that Micah prophesied in the days of Hezekiah, and told him that Zion should be ploughed up like a field, and Jerusalem should be as a heap, and the mountains of the house should be as the high place of the forest, but Hezekiah did not put him to death; and Uriah, he prophesied against the city of Jerusalem, he prophesied to king Joachim, and to all his men of power, and princes, and the king sought to slay him, but Uriah heard it, and went into Egypt, but the king sent for him from there, and slew him; but the hand of Ahikam was with Jeremiah that they should not give him to the people to put him to death; and have not many of the priests imprisoned, and sought the life of many of God's prophets now days, which prophets declared against you similar things?

And Hananiah a false prophet, which took the yoke off Jeremiah's neck, and prophesied lies unto the people, then Jeremiah made him yokes of iron, and Jeremiah said to Hananiah, 'hear now the words that the Lord has sent unto you, you makest these people to trust in a lie, therefore, thus said the Lord, I will cast you off from the earth, this year you shall die, because you have spoken

rebelliously against the Lord: so Hananiah, the false prophet died the same year, in the seventh month. *Jer* 28:10-16.

Again, 'thus said the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, let not your prophets and your diviners that be among you deceive you, neither give ear to your dreams which you dream; for they prophesy to you a lie in my name; I have not sent them said the Lord.' So their ears are to be unto the Lord, and not to the dreams of their false prophets, nor their own.

And you may see what became of Shemaiah the false prophet, who prophesied unto the captivity, and sent letters in the name of the Lord to them in Babel; thus said the Lord [of Shemaiah,] 'because he had prophesied unto you and I sent him not, he has caused you to trust in a lie, therefore, thus said the Lord, I will visit Shemaiah and his seed, he shall not have a man to dwell among his people, neither shall he behold the good that I will do for my people said the Lord, because he has spoken rebelliously against me, said the Lord.' Therefore, see you priests in Christendom, how dangerous it is to speak lying words in the name of the Lord, and say, *thus said the Lord*, when the Lord never spoke unto them; and go about to make him the father of their lies; but such you may see the end of, which were reprov'd by the true prophet, *Jer* 29 and such shall not enjoy the good of the land, though they may persecute people for a time. And in *Jer*. 37:15, where the princes were angry with Jeremiah, and smote him, and laid him in prison in the house of Jonathan, and put him in the dungeon. In *Jer* 38:4-6, they desired that Jeremiah might be put to death; for he weakens the hands of the people, then said Zedekiah, the king, 'behold, he is in your hands; for the king can deny you nothing, then took they Jeremiah and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah, and they let him down with cords into the dungeon, and there was no water but mire; so Jeremiah stuck fast in the mire, and Ebedmelech, the black-moor, told the king that they had done evil in casting Jeremiah the prophet into the dungeon, and he dieth for hunger; and so here the black-moor had more mercy upon him than his own countrymen, the professing priests and Jews, and the king bid the black-moor take thirty men with him, and take up Jeremiah before he died, and so he took old rags and clouts, and bid Jeremiah put them under his armholes between the cords, and so they drew Jeremiah out, as in *Jer* 38:9-13. Jeremiah remained in prison until the children of Israel went into captivity to Babylon, and Nebuchadnezzar's chief steward took Jeremiah in and said unto him, 'that he loosed him this day from his chain that was on his hands, and if it please you to come with me unto Babylon, come and I will look well unto you, but if not, tarry still, behold all the land is before you, whether it seemeth good and convenient for you to go, there go.'

So here is seen the moderation of this heathen to the Lord's prophet, and the fulfilling of the Lord's prophets' sayings upon all the false priests and prophets;

for he was bound in a chain to have gone to Babylon among the rest, until he understood who he was; and this chief steward of Nebuchadnezzar did say unto Jeremiah, 'the Lord your God has pronounced this plague against this place, and now the Lord has brought it to pass, and done it according as he has said, because you have sinned against the Lord, and have not obeyed his voice, therefore this thing is come upon you.'

Now here you may see, here this heathen could see the fulfilling of this word of the Lord upon the rebellious professing Jews and Jerusalem, for sinning against the Lord, and not obeying his voice; and see how this heathen could believe in the Lord, and speak of the Lord, which had not the scriptures, which was Nebuchadnezzar's chief steward, as in *Jer* 40:2-3. And have not many of the Lord's prophets found more moderation and civility among the heathen, than from the outside professing christians?

And in *Lam* 2:14, where he speaks of the flattering prophets, and said, 'Your prophets have looked out vain and foolish things for you, and they have not discovered your iniquity to turn away your captivity, but have looked out for you false prophecies and causes of banishment.' And so instead of discovering to people their iniquity, which is the cause of captivity and banishment from the Lord, you teach people to plead for their body of sin, and death, and iniquity to the grave, when all is buried together, then for ten or twenty shillings give them a funeral sermon.

And in *Lam* 4:13. 'For sins of her prophets, and the iniquity of her priests, that have shed the blood of the just in the midst of her, they have wandered as blind men in the streets, and they are polluted with blood.' See how Jeremiah laments over these poor people, to whom the false priests and prophets were the cause of so much misery; and was it not because of those false priests, scribes and Pharisees that destruction came upon the Jews and Jerusalem in the days of Christ, who would neither own him themselves, nor suffer others; and is it not the same cause that brings misery upon all Christendom now, even the sins and iniquities of the priests and people?

And in *Jer* 13, there you may see how the false priests were like to foxes that worried and destroyed the sheep and lambs; 'son of man prophesy against the prophets of Israel, that prophesy out of their own hearts,' so it was not from the Lord, 'thus said the Lord God, **woe unto the foolish prophets that follow their own spirits, and have seen nothing**, Oh Israel, your prophets are like unto foxes in the waste places; you have not risen up in the gaps, neither made up the hedges of the house of Israel, to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord.' So is not this the mark now of all the false prophets that follow their own spirits and see nothing, who say, they have not the same spirit as the prophets and apostles had? Is not this your confession both in old and new England, and

other places? How can you make up the hedge, or stand in the gap, and not be in that spirit and power that the prophets and apostles were in; but rather, out of the power, do you not make the gap wider?

But further, the Lord said concerning the false prophets, 'They have seen vanity, and lying divination, saying the Lord said it, and the Lord has not sent them, and they have made others to hope that they would confirm the word of their prophecy: have you not seen a vain vision, and have not you seen a lying divination, and you say the Lord said it, when I have not spoken? therefore, thus said the Lord God, because you have spoken vanity and seen lies, therefore behold, I am against you said the Lord.'

Now here we see such that the Lord has not spoken to, and the Lord has not sent them, yet these false prophets or teachers would father their words upon the Lord, and will they not do so now, saying the Lord said it, and profess themselves that the Lord sent them, when the Lord never spoke to them? But the Lord and his prophets are against all such? And the Lord said, 'My hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity and divine lies, they shall not be in the assemblies of my people,... they shall know that he is Lord;' and said the Lord, 'because they have deceived my people, saying peace, and there was no peace; one builds up a wall, and behold, the other daubs it with untempered mortar,* and this wall shall fall; for there shall come a great shower, and I will send hailstones that will cause it to fall, and a stormy wind shall break it down, and when the wall has fallen, will it not be said, where is the daubing wherewith you have daubed it?' So God will destroy all these false prophets, and their wall, and their daubings to the ground, so that the foundation thereof shall be discovered, and it shall fall and be consumed, and you shall know that I am the Lord.

**Site Editor's Comments:* To daub the wall with untempered mortar is try to build the wall with mortar that crumbles: false mortar, false teachings, both of which result in destruction. Tempered mortar is words and teachings from the Spirit of God. Untempered mortar is words read from the Bible, without the Spirit. The spiritual equivalent of the physical wall is the spiritual wall of protection in the heart, consecration; to be sanctified and cleansed by the washing of the water of the word, to be protected from evil, while still in the world, but being secure in union with Christ Jesus; still walking through this world's temptation's, but being within Christ Jesus, who never fell, unable to fall to temptation. Obviously a minister, who is not in union with Christ himself, is not able to speak from the Spirit of God, not able to speak the Word of God, as did the apostles; therefore a minister, speaking from his carnal mind, speaking from the deceit of his heart, speaking from his vain imagination, is unable to build or repair the walls of New Jerusalem in the hearts of his listeners; he leaves his listeners continued vulnerable to evil and to fall in sin.

Further, Jesus said. **He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory**, but he who seeks the glory of the One who sent him, that man is true, and there is no unrighteousness in him. John 7:18. So the supposed ministers of Christ, not called by him specifically, not trained by him, not authorized by him, not sent to the harvest, is seeking your money, which is forbidden, and is seeking his own glory.

'Thus said the Lord, I will accomplish my wrath upon the wall, and upon them that have daubed it with untempered mortar, and will say unto you, the wall is no more, neither the daubers thereof (namely, the false prophets of Israel), who prophesied upon Jerusalem, and seeing visions of peace for it, and there is no peace said the Lord.'

So here is the end of the false prophets, and their daubing, and their wall, who follow their own spirit, and see nothing, and such cannot temper the mortar; for that is done by God's spirit, which they must follow, and those who do follow God's spirit, cry against such prophets as Ezekiel prophesied against.

And so the son of man was to set his face against all such as prophesied out of their own hearts, and such as sowed pillows under the armholes, that they might lie soft in their sins and wickedness, and hunted the soul of God's people. And said the Lord, 'will you pollute me among my people for handfuls of barley, and pieces of bread, to slay the souls of them that should not die.'

Therefore thus said the Lord God, 'Behold, I will have to do with your pillows, wherewith you have hunted the souls to make my people fly, and I will tear them from your armholes, and I will let the souls go,' blessed be the Lord, for it is his own work, which many witness, even the souls that you hunt to make them fly; here the Lord rescues the souls out of the snares of the false prophets, to him be glory forever; 'your veils also will I tear, and deliver my people out of your hand, and they shall be no more in your hands, to be hunted, and you shall know that I am the Lord, because with your lies you have made the hearts of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad, and **strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not turn from his wicked way, by promising him life;**' and this is the work of the false prophet, that follows his own spirit, that has not the spirit of God's prophets, to make the heart of the righteous sad, and to strengthen the hands of the wicked, that they should not turn from their wicked way, promising them life in it, and teaching them to plead for sin as long as they live; but the everlasting life is out of it, being turned from the way of the wicked; and do not you priests now a-days promise them life, though you say, they must carry their body of sin and death to the grave; and so are worse than your forefathers, whom the Lord by his prophets declared against.

Therefore said the Lord, 'You shall see no more vanity, nor divine divination, for I will deliver my people out of your hands, and you shall know that I am the Lord.' So it is the Lord that delivers his people out of the hands of these false prophets, that follow their own spirits, and teach for handfuls of barley and pieces of bread, a divination of their own brain, and say, 'thus said the Lord,' when the Lord never spoke unto them, nor sent them; and many can witness this deliverance of the Lord, blessed be his name forever.

And the Lord said also, 'You son of man, the children of my people that talk of you by the walls, and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, everyone to his brother, saying, come I pray you, and hear what is the word that comes from the Lord, for they come unto you as a people used to come, and my people set before you, and hear your words, but they will not do them, for with their mouths they make jests, and their hearts go after their covetousness, and lo, you are to them as a jesting song of one that has a pleasant voice, and can sing well, for they hear your words, but they do them not; and when this comes to pass, for lo, it will come, then they shall know a prophet has been among them, when the Lord has brought his plagues and judgments upon them,' as in the foregoing chapter. *Ezekiel* 33:31. And is not this the condition of people now? Are they not more prone to do the false prophets' words than the true prophet's words, which he speaks from the Lord, and yet will say the good words, but not do them? and have not you been often warned of this?

And *Eze* 34:2-10. there you may see the evil shepherds, which Ezekiel was to prophesy against, 'Thus said the Lord unto the shepherds, woe be unto the shepherds of Israel, that feed themselves; should not the shepherds feed the flocks? you eat the fat, you clothe you with the wool, you fill them that are fed, but you feed not the sheep; the weak have you not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, neither have you bound up the broken, nor brought again that which was driven away, neither have you sought that which was lost, but with churlishness and with rigor have you ruled them, (mark here the false prophets' evil works who left the true work) and the sheep were scattered without a shepherd and when they were dispersed they were devoured of all the beasts of the field; my sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill; yes, my flocks were scattered throughout all the earth, and none searched nor sought after them; therefore as I live, said the Lord, surely because my flock was spoiled, and my sheep were devoured of all the beasts of the field, having no shepherd; neither did my shepherds seek my flock, but fed themselves, and not the flock; thus said the Lord behold I come against the shepherds, and I will require my sheep at their hands; [mark,] and cause them to cease from feeding of the sheep, neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more, [mark, feed themselves,] I will deliver my sheep from their mouths, [mark, from the shepherds' mouths,] and they shall no more devour them.' so here is seen the

marks of those shepherds that devour God's people; come try yourselves you shepherds, now days are not these marks found upon you?

'For thus said the Lord, behold, I will search out my sheep, and seek them, and I will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day, seek them, and I will bring them out from among the people, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel, and I will feed them in a good pasture, in their own fold, and there they shall lie in a good fold, and in fat pasture, and I will feed my sheep, and bring them to their rest, said the Lord, and I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and I will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen the weak, but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and will feed them with judgment;' and this is the Lord's work, by his power, which many can witness, blessed be his name for ever; for the Lord does judge between sheep and goats: so the Lord is our shepherd, and we shall not want; and the Lord said to the false shepherds, 'seeing it is a small thing unto you to eat up the good pasture, but you must tread down with your feet the residue of your pasture, and to have drank of the deep waters, but you must trouble the residue with your feet, and my sheep eat that which you have trodden with your feet, and drink that which you have fouled with your feet; therefore, thus said the Lord God unto them, behold I, even I, [mark,] will judge between the fat sheep, and the lean sheep, because you have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the weak with your horns, until you have scattered them abroad; therefore, I will save my sheep, says the Lord, and they shall no more be spoiled, or a prey unto you; and I will judge between sheep and sheep, and I will set up a shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David, and he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd, and I will be their God.' Here you may see the Lord God is drawing and gathering his sheep to Christ Jesus, the true shepherd, that lays down his life for his sheep; and this many do witness, that have been scattered, and been made a prey upon by the mouth of the false shepherds, that have fed themselves, and have been wandering from mountain to mountain in this cloudy dark day; but the Lord has sought them that have been lost, and bound them up that have been broken, and strengthened the weak, and has brought many to the one fold, into his pasture, to the one shepherd, Christ Jesus, and is bringing others to him; therefore, try yourselves, you pastors, whether you are not found in the steps of those false shepherds' ways and steps, which the true prophets cried against.

And Christ said, 'none can come unto me, except the Father draw him;' and the truth of this we witness, blessed be the Lord forever: 'as troops of robbers lie in wait for a man, so the company of priests murder on the road toward Shechem; yes, they commit villainy and outrages.' Was not this so in Hosea's days, as you may see in *Hosea* 6:9. Did the priests in the days of Christ not commit murder in the way? Is it not the same today? On *Mat* 27, read how early they all got up in the morning to work their villainy, for when it was morning, all the chief priests

and the elders of the people held a consultation against Jesus to put Him to death: and has not this spirit and practice been found among you priests and professors now days against Christ's followers?

And in *Amos 7* see what rage the high priest Amaziah, was in against Amos, and informed king Jeroboam against him, saying that, 'Amos has conspired against you, O king;' and warned Amos to be gone into the land of Judah, and prophesy there, and prophesy no more at Bethel, which was the king's chapel and court: and then Amos the herdsman said to the priest Amaziah that, 'he was no prophet, but a herdsman, and a gatherer of figs.' Here you may see the wrath and rage of the high priest against the servant of God, as they do now days.

And in *Micah 2:11*, 'If a man walking in the spirit of falsehood lie, saying, I will prophesy unto you of wine, and of strong drink, he shall even be a prophet for this people.' These were the prophets that pleased people then, and are they not them that do so now? and such like prophets are not like to turn people to God more now than then.

And in *Mic 3:2-3*, see the chapter throughout, and measure yourselves by those priests and prophets, and see if you be not found in their steps, 'they hate good,' said the prophet, 'and love the evil, they pluck off their skins from them, and their flesh from their bones; they eat also the flesh of my people, [mark, men eat,] they flea off their skins from them; and they break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the cauldron, then shall they cry unto the Lord, but I will not hear them; he will hide his face from them, because they have done wickedly in their works.' Now here you may see these wicked workers could cry unto the Lord; they had a profession then, as many in their practice do now.

But, 'thus said the Lord concerning the prophets that deceive my people, and bite them with their teeth, [mark,] and cry peace, (this is a strange peace), but if any man put not into their mouths, [provide them a livelihood,] into their mouths, they prepare war against them;' and have not we seen this scripture fulfilled, and daily fulfilling among the priests of Christendom, so called?

'Therefore, night shall be unto you for a vision, and darkness shall be unto you for a divination, and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them.' [Mark,] you that are found in these steps; is not the sun gone down upon you all, and does not then dark night follow? read your condition, and try yourselves.

'Then shall the seer be ashamed, and the soothsayer confounded, yes, they shall cover their lips; for they shall have no answer from God.' And is not this one of the doctrines of your faith, that there is no hearing God's voice now a days, nor

no answer from God; so that you may cover your lips and be ashamed, and say the sun has gone down upon you, and your day is dark upon you: but Micah said, 'truly I am full of power by the spirit of the Lord; and of judgment, and of strength, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and unto Israel, his sin.' And are not such things to be declared against now, by them that are full of the power and spirit of God now in Christendom, as he declared against then.

And said he, 'they build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity;' and may it not be said, that Christendom has been built up with blood and persecution, and with iniquity? Now is not your Zion and your Jerusalem all on heaps, and like a forest that is barren, who plead for sin and imperfection to the grave?

'The heads thereof judge for reward,' said Micah, 'the priests thereof teach for hire, the prophets thereof prophesy for money, yet will they lean upon the Lord and say, is not the Lord among us, no evil can come upon us? Therefore shall Zion for your sakes be ploughed up like a field, and Jerusalem shall be an heap, and the mountain of the house, as the high place of the forest.' And now try yourselves, you priests and prophets, do not you teach for hire, and prophesy for money? Do you not think that your Zion must be turned up like a field with God's plough, and your Jerusalem be as a heap, and the mountain of your house like the high place of the forest barren, you being found in the steps of those priests and prophets. If you believe Micah to be a true prophet, do you not think those things will come upon you, that he declared?

And in *Zeph 3: 4*, where he said, 'Her prophets are insolent, treacherous people; her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law.' Now measure yourselves with these, and look into your actions, that profess yourselves ministers of the gospel, and see if this lightness and wickedness be not found among you, and that your sanctuaries are not corrupted? Do you not plead for a [life-long] body of sin and death, and cast the law of the spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus behind your backs, which makes free from the law of sin and death.

And in *Zech 11:17*, 'Oh idle shepherds that leave the flock, the sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye; his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.' See here is God's judgments denounced upon the idle shepherds that leave their flocks. And in the 8th verse, it is said, 'three shepherds did I also cut off in one month, and my soul loathed them, and their souls abhorred me.' Here is the end of such shepherds as abhor the Lord, and yet pretend to keep his sheep. Now try yourselves, you priests of Christendom, see if your right eye is not darkened, and your arm dried up; and if so, then how can you see?

And in *Mal* 2, the priests' lips should have preserved knowledge, and they should have sought it at the Lord's mouth; 'but now, O you priests, this commandment is for you, if you will not hear it, nor consider it in your hearts to give glory to my name, said the Lord of hosts; I will even send a curse upon you, and will curse your blessings, yes, I have cursed them already;' mark, because you do not consider it in your hearts; therefore, what are your blessings [uttered by your lips, from your carnal mind] good for, if they are cursed?

'Behold, said the Lord, I will corrupt your seed, and cast dung upon your faces, and you shall be like unto it;' [mark,] like unto dung, which the Lord will cast upon you; and therefore, all you priests consider this command, and take it to heart, who have left the work of God, whose lips should have preserved knowledge, if you had sought his law from his mouth; but you say, now days, there is no hearing his voice; then no receiving his law from his mouth, namely: the law of the spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus, whom God has made a priest higher than the heavens, whom all people must seek their knowledge from, and salvation from, for he is their treasure. Here you may see what judgments came upon the Jews and their prophets, shepherds, priests, and pastors; and what misery they brought the people into, and what judgments God sent his prophets to denounce against them, and to disown them, and what misery he brought them into, that spoke and run, and used their tongues, and stole God's words from their neighbor, when the Lord never spoke to them, nor sent them: and these were such as taught for hire, and for filthy lucre, and handful of barley, and for pieces of bread, and were the flatterers and daubers with untempered mortar; and filthy dreamers, and followed the divination of their own hearts and brains, and followed their own spirit, seeing nothing, and strengthen the hands of the wicked, and saddened the righteous, seeking for their gain from their quarter, where they have got their quarter, there they are seeking for their gain; speaking peace to people while they put into their mouths, but if not, they prepared war against them, and these turned against the Lords' prophets, and cast his law behind their backs, and cast off the Lord, though they might get the form of words, of the law and of the prophets, yet out of the life these were all judged, by the Lord, and his prophets that spoke from the mouth of the Lord; therefore such cannot be owned now that be found in their steps in Christendom, and that are found in their practices, if they own God and his prophets that declared against them, as you may see in the prophets of the old testament, and therefore try yourselves by these scriptures.

And now let us see in the new testament what sort of preachers Christ and the apostles cried against, and what sort they owned and sent forth.

Christ said, 'Woe unto the scribes and blind Pharisees, which made clean the outside of the platter, and appeared beautiful outwardly, but inwardly were full

of bribery, and excess, and dead men's bones, and filthiness.' Now these were high professors that had a beautiful outside, and shined like a cup or a platter on the outside? and did not many of these professors outstrip many of the professors of Christ's words now days in the outside?

Again, Christ speaks to the multitude, and his disciples, and tells them how they shall know the false teachers with their marks; 'They bind heavy burdens, grievous to be born, and lay them on men's shoulders,' here is one mark, but they themselves will not bear them with one of their little fingers; they will not move that which they lay upon others, and that is contrary to the law; 'for all their works they do to be seen of men, they make their phylacteries broad, and make long the fringes of their garments;' here is another mark, (by their garments) and doing what they do to be seen, which these in our days may try themselves by, whether these marks be not found upon them.

'They love the highest place in feasts, and to have the highest place in the assemblies;' here is another mark: 'they love greetings in the market-place, and to be called of men, rabbi or master.' here is another mark.

But said Christ to his disciples, 'Be not you called of men master or rabbi; for one is your master, even Christ, and all you are brethren; he that is the greatest among you let him be your servant.' Here is Christ's doctrine to his ministers, *Mat 23:4-11*, and the marks or tokens by which people may know the false; and therefore, try yourselves, you preachers, and priests in Christendom, have you not all these marks and badges, and to be cried against by the spirit?

And the false teachers were such as 'garnished the sepulchres of the righteous,' and said, 'If we had been in the days of our forefathers, we would not have killed the prophets, or have been partakers with our forefathers in the blood of the prophets; so then be you witnesses, said Christ, unto yourselves, that you are the children of them that murdered the prophets. Oh, generation of vipers! how can you escape the damnation of hell,' said Christ? And do not many say so now, that are found in the practise of their forefathers, the scribes and Pharisees?

And further, Christ said, 'Therefore, behold I send unto you prophets and wise men, and scribes, and of them you shall kill and crucify, and of them you shall scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city;' mark, these were such as Christ should send among those professors, and that was then to be fulfilled, that upon you might come all the righteous blood that was shed upon the earth.

Now have not many christians in profession, but not in possession fulfilled these sayings of Christ upon his servants, in scourging and persecuting, and putting them out of their synagogues in these our days.

And in *Mat 10* where Christ sent forth his disciples to preach, and said, 'As you go, preach, saying the kingdom of heaven is at hand; heal the sick, cleanse the leprous, cast out devils, freely you have received, freely give, possess not gold or silver in your purses, nor take a scrip for your journey, neither two coats, nor shoes, nor staff; for the workman is worthy of his meat; and into what city or town you shall come, enquire who is worthy in it, and there abide until you go there; and when you come into an house, salute the same, and if the house be worthy let your peace come upon it, but if it be not worthy let your peace return to you again, and whosoever will not receive you, nor hear your words; [mark] nor hear your words, when you depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet for a testimony against them; truly I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city,' said Christ.

'Behold I send you, as sheep in the midst of wolves, be you therefore wise as serpents, and innocent as doves, beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the councils, and will scourge you in their synagogues, [mark,] in their synagogues; you shall be brought before the governors and kings for my namesake, in witness to them and to the Gentiles; but when they deliver you up, take no thought, how or what you shall speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what you shall say; for it is not you that speak, but the spirit of the Father which speaketh in you.' Now mark how Christ sent forth his ministers, here they were to give freely; for freely they had received of Christ, and they were not to take gold or silver in their purses, nor scrips, they were to enquire who was worthy in town or city, and what was set before them, that they were to eat; they were not to enquire what benefits or augmentations belonged to such a town or place, and they were not to go to the magistrates for the bag and their staff, but who was worthy; and they were to be as innocent as doves; for they went among wolves as sheep: they were to be delivered up before councils, and scourged in the synagogues; they were to be brought before rulers, but they were not to take thought or study what to speak; for it was the spirit of the Father spoke in them. Now who among you in Christendom, goes on in this path of the disciples of Christ, as you may see *Mat 16, Mark 6, and Luke 9*, and obey the command of Christ herein.

And in *Luke 10*, where Christ appointed his seventy disciples, and sent them out two and two before him, and he said unto them, 'the harvest is great but the laborers are few, pray therefore, the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into his harvest;' [mark,] pray for the Lord to send them forth, who is the Lord of the harvest; so these were not to be sent forth by men, but by the Lord of the

harvest; and this was Christ's command for his disciples to pray, and Christ said to his seventy, 'go your ways, behold I will send you forth as lambs among wolves;' (mark, these wolves), you professing Jews of the law, and the prophets; 'carry neither bag nor scrip, neither salute any man by the way, and into whatsoever house you enter, say, peace to this house; and if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it, if not it shall turn to you again; and in that house abide, eating and drinking such things as shall by them be set before you; for the laborer is worthy of his meat; go not from house to house.' So you may see this was their wages, a little meat and drink; 'but into whatsoever city you shall enter, if they receive you, eat such things as are set before you; heal the sick that are there, and say unto them, the kingdom of God is come near unto you; but into whatsoever city you shall enter, if they will not receive you, go your ways out into the streets of the same city, and say, [mark, they were to speak in the streets,] even the very dust which cleaveth on us of your city, we wipe off against you; notwithstanding know this, that the kingdom of God is come near unto you; [mark,] is come near unto you; for say unto you that it shall be easier in that day for them of Sodom, than for that city; he that heareth you, heareth me, said Christ; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me; and the seventy returned again from their preaching with joy, saying, Lord even the devils are subject unto us through your name, and Christ bid them, rejoice not in that, but rather because their names were written in heaven; 'and that same hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit and said, I confess unto you, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and has revealed them to babes, even so Father, because it so pleased you; then he turned to his disciples and said, all things are given me of my Father, and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father, nor who the Father is, save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him; and he turned to his disciples and said, blessed are the eyes which see what you see.'

So here you may see how Christ sent forth the seventy disciples, and how they came again with joy, and how his Father had revealed such things to babes, and hidden them from the wise and learned, and that 'no man knows the Son, but the Father, and no one knows the Father, but the Son, and him **to whom the Son will reveal him:**' so it is clear neither learned nor wise know the Father nor Son, but by Revelation, as may be seen at large in *Luke 10:22, Mat 11:27*. Therefore, all you teachers in Christendom, come and try yourselves by these scriptures, and see whether you be not found out of the practice of Christ's disciples and ministers, and disobedient to Christ's commands.

And now these seventy, as the twelve, were not to inquire into what town or city they came, where was the greatest benefice or augmentation, and come and tell Christ they had gotten such things; but their joy was, that he had given them power over the devil: and Christ said in *Luke 22:35*, unto his disciples, 'when I

sent you without bag and scrip, and shoes, lacked you anything? and the disciples answered him, we lacked nothing.'

So here you may see, though Christ sent forth his ministers without bag or scrip, silver or gold, and commanded them to give freely, as they had received freely of him, yet they wanted for nothing. Therefore, consider all you that call yourselves ministers, that say, you have not heard the voice of Christ, are not you always in want, though you have bag and scrip, silver and gold? Will you go to any place, unless there is a great parsonage, or some supplementary income; therefore, measure yourselves with such as Christ sent forth, and see how unlike you are unto them? Have you not disregarded Christ's command, who said, 'freely you have received, freely give?' How can you receive freely from Christ, when you never expect to hear his voice, or to be sent out by him? Therefore, have you not given judgment against yourselves, that you are such as run, and speak, and use your tongues, and follow your own spirits, and see nothing, whom God or Christ never has sent nor spoken unto? Are not you like the inwardly ravening wolves, spoken of in *Mat* 7:15, that have the outside, the sheeps' clothing, the outside of the sheep, but not the life of the sheep; and so are the thistles and the thorn trees, that bear neither grapes nor figs, but deceive people with the sheep's outside, with which you cover the wolfish nature. Has this not been the case of Christendom, who say you do not have the same power and spirit the apostles had? Your lacking of the power and spirit of the apostles we believe, for your fruits have declared it, though you may have the outward words of the prophets and apostles, and trouble those that are truly in the life of the apostles, as your forefathers [the false prophets] did.

And in *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, and *John*, you may see how it was the chief priest, scribes and Pharisees, that were the great professors, with their elders, that were the greatest opposers against Christ our Saviour, as may be seen in *Mat* 27:15-26, and how that they persuaded the common people against Christ, and to ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus; and the chief priests mocked him, with the scribes and elders of the Pharisees.

And in *Mark* 14, where they led Jesus away to the high priest, and how the high priest sought false witness against him, to put him to death.

And in *Luke* 23, there you may see how vehemently the high priests and the scribes accused Jesus, and it was the high priests that delivered Christ to Pilate, *John* 18:35. And they were the informers against Jesus; and are not they so now? Let town and country speak; and Judas sold Christ for thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests, and when they had crucified him, they gave large money to the soldiers to say, 'that his disciples had stolen him away by night,' as in *Mat* 28:13. so Judas was the first that sold Christ, and Simon Magus was the second, who would have bought the gift of God, to have got money by it, and he offered

the apostles money to have got that gift; but see Peter's answer, 'your money perish with you, because you think the gift of God can be bought with money, for I see you are in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity.' Therefore consider, all you that say you have bought the gift of your ministry,* and it cost your parents a great deal of money, and therefore, you must have so much a year for it again; do you think that you are not in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity? Don't you think that you and your money, and what you have bought with it, and sell, will perish together? read *Acts 8:18-23*. Now you cannot sell Christ, as Judas did, except it be in the members of his body; for he is risen, though you may sell his words, by which there is more yearly revenue gotten, by the parsonages, glebe-lands, augmentations, and other revenues, than by any other trade whatsoever in Christendom. How many millions are extracted yearly in Christendom, (let the accountants compute it), through use of the prophets', Christ's, and the apostles' words, which they freely spoke forth, and declared against such as taught for money, and for filthy lucre, and for means, as you may see both in the old and new testament, how they declared against such; and ought not such to be declared against now, by them that are in the same spirit?

*Ministers bid in auction for an open parish, measuring the expected income to gauge their bid in money for the job.

And Paul in *Acts 20:26-31*, tells the elders of the church of Ephesus, that 'by the space of three years I ceased not to warn everyone both night and day with tears, (mark, for three years together he did warn these people at Ephesus), and I take God to record this day, (says he), that I am clear from the blood of all men; for I have kept nothing back, but have showed you all the counsel of God; take heed therefore unto yourselves, and the flock which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers of; feed the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood;' [mark,] it is the Holy Ghost that made them overseers, and there was their succession; so they were not made overseers by men; and so with this Holy Ghost they did oversee and feed this flock, the church, which Christ is the head of.

And now all you that pretend yourselves to be overseers, and yet say, there is no having the Holy Ghost now days, as the apostles had, so then you are no true overseers, neither can you feed the church of Christ; for mark, it was the Holy Ghost that made them overseers; and those who are the true overseers must succeed them in the Holy Ghost, and be made overseers by it, for the apostle said after his departure from the church at Ephesus, where he had been for the space of three years, 'grievous wolves should enter in among them, not sparing the flock;' and those wolves should come with the form of godliness, and with the sheep's clothing, but inwardly ravened from the holy spirit of God; but he

'commended them to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build them up, and to give them an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.'

And Paul tells the Ephesians further, 'I have coveted no man's silver, nor gold, nor apparel,' though he had preached among them three years, as aforesaid; 'you know' says he, 'that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and unto them that were with me.'

And now you old and new England professors and others, that say, there was no need for Paul to have a settled maintenance, because he travelled up and down; so now here you may see where Paul was three years together, and yet coveted no man's silver, nor gold, nor apparel; and moreover, said he, 'you know that these hands have ministered to my necessities, and to them that were with me, for the space of three years;' for you never read here that he sued any man for tithes or wages; Paul was not like that for he labored with his hands.

And further Paul said, 'I have showed unto you all things;' mark, how that so laboring he ought to support the weak, not to destroy the weak through covetousness; and Paul said, 'remember the words of our Lord Jesus, how he said, it is a blessed thing to give, rather than to receive:' come you priests and professors, try yourselves with Paul's practice here, and with this scripture, *Acts 20* and try yourselves by Christ's command, which he gave to his ministers and messengers, 'freely (without pay) you have received, freely (without charge) give.' You say the scripture is your rule, come try yourselves by your rule; for if you will not try yourselves by it, others will try you by it; do you freely give? Do you covet no man's silver, gold or apparel? Do you labor with your own hands, to supply your own necessities and others? Paul, who was clear of the blood of all men, and declared unto them the whole counsel of God, did this; yes, for the space of three years to the church at Ephesus; besides many other places that he speaks of, among whom he was a witness of Christ. But let the jails and the jailers, and the baliffs and sheriffs witness against you for them, whose goods you have taken, that you never did any work for.

And in *Acts 28:30*, where Paul you may see remained two full years in his hired house, and received all that came in to him, preaching the kingdom of God, and those things which concerned the Lord Jesus Christ, with boldness of speech without let among the heathen Romans; I say, this was Paul, that coveted no man's silver, nor gold, nor apparel, who preached among the Gentiles at Rome; he had no monastery nor abbey, nor great steeple-house to preach in then, nor set wages, nor did he sue people for maintenance or tithes,* to cast his hearers into prison, because they would not give him such things; if you say he did, let us see your proof for it in scripture.

*The priests and ministers of 17th Century England insisted that all persons in their geographic district, member or not, pay a tenth of all crops, livestock, earnings, etc., to the parish ministry; and if they didn't pay, they went to court to sue them, who if unable to pay, were then sent to prison. Do not let the ridiculousness of this practice cause you to ignore your collection of tithes and salaries; for while you may not be forcing people to do this, you are certainly pressuring them to contribute, through peer pressure, if nothing else. So, anything but an unsolicited gift, is covetousness, the wages of unrighteousness, gain from godliness, and the actions of a hireling; and violates the command of "freely you have received (without payment), free give (without charge)," Mat 10:8. Where Fox has limited his convictions to forcing people, not even part of the congregation, to pay tithes, I have added the reminder that Christ, Paul, Peter, and Jude all spoke against preaching for money, and that only unsolicited gifts were permitted. Those ministers who violate the commands of Jesus and Peter forbidding the taking of money from the flock face sudden disaster.

And now if you should object and say, 'custom to whom custom, and tribute to whom tribute;' this related to the magistrates, who were for the punishment of the evildoers, and were for the praise of them that do well, such things we were never against, paying for conscience sake; but this in *Rom 13* is nothing to justify hirelings, and to oppose Christ's command, which is, 'freely (without pay) you have received, freely (without charge) give;' for the apostle Paul said in *Rom 16*, 'now I beseech you brethren, mark them diligently who cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them; [mark,] for they are such as serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies, and with fair speeches and flattering words deceive the hearts of the simple.' Come, try yourselves, you teachers by those scriptures; is it not you who make the divisions, who have the flattering titles (Reverend) and fair speeches [sermons from your carnal mind], deceiving the hearts of the simple; you who do not serve the Lord Jesus Christ, but your own bellies [by collecting tithes and salaries]? Is it not your bellies that you serve with your great parsonages, and glebe-lands, and augmentations, Easter reckonings, and midsummer dues? For if you served the Lord Jesus Christ, then you would obey his command, which is, 'freely (without pay) you have received, freely (without charge) give,' and not persecute and cast in prison such as will not put into your mouths. If your parsonages and rich benefits were to be taken away, then we would see how many *servants of Christ* would be left among you?

And Paul preached at Corinth a year and a half, and taught the word of God among them freely. *Acts 28:11,1 Cor 4:12*.

And Paul worked with Priscilla and Aquila at Corinth, who were of the same craft as Paul was of; for their craft was to make tents, and he abode with them as aforesaid. Nevertheless Paul preached up and down in the Jews' synagogues,

testifying to them that Jesus was the Christ; and now compare your practice with Paul's and Priscilla's and Aquila's, you priests; for though he was a tradesman, yet he preached the gospel; and this Priscilla and Aquila were both instructors of Apollos concerning Christ, as in *Acts* 25 of whom Paul was a minister.

And often you priests have brought Ananias and Sapphira his wife for proof for your maintenance, against such as keep back your tithes, because they kept away part of the price of their goods, and laid it not down at the apostles' feet, which comparison is unfair and your use of an unjust weight or measure; for Peter did not request the money, nor did the apostles. While the property or money remained in their hands they might have kept it all, and were not even required or asked to have sold their goods; for the apostles did not desire it, nor coveted any man's gold or silver. The problem was this husband's and wife's wilful and wickedly lying against the Holy Ghost, and their agreeing together in lying, which brought the judgment of God upon them; and this in no way supports your justification for a salary or tithes; but take heed, for fear that the same judgment overtakes you for lying against the spirit of God in your consciences, and doing what you know that you should not do, and claiming to be what you are not, as you may see in *Acts* 5. And whereas you quote, that the christians sold all their goods in the primitive time, and brought in the price of them, and laid it down at the apostles' feet; this was a voluntary act on their part, it was not done by solicitation or compulsion from the apostles, nor by their desire, neither was it done altogether for the apostles' use, but for the supply of all such as were in necessity among them; and tithes in the time of the law were not for the priests' and the Levites' own use only, but for the widows, strangers, poor, and fatherless.