

A

TOUCH STONE

FOR THE

C L E R G Y.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A P O E M,

W R O T E

By a CLERGYMAN in VIRGINIA, *i. e.*

In a STORM of WIND and RAIN.

Rev. Samuel Davies

1724 - 176

Judge not the Preacher, for he is thy Judge ;
If thou mislike him, thou conceiv'st him not.
GOD calleth Preaching Folly : Do not grudge
To pick out Treasures from an earthen Pot.
The Worst speak something Good : If all want Sense,
GOD takes a Text, and preacheth Patience.

Church Porch, HERBERT.

*Moreover, it is required in Stewards, that a Man may be
found faithful.*

1 COR. iv. 2.

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SHORT SKETCH,

BY WHICH

The FAITHFUL Ministers of CHRIST

MAY BE KNOWN

From the UNFAITHFUL:

What is the Chaff to the Wheat, saith the LORD?

Jer. xxiii. 28.





The FAITHFUL Minister.

HE hath good Ends and *Views in taking Orders*, and pursuing his Work. He is *really* moved by the HOLY GHOST †, hath a genuine Principle of Love to GOD and CHRIST, and deep Concern for the Salvation of himself and his Hearers. He takes no sinful, indirect or suspicious Methods to get a Living, but submits himself to Providence, and is not eager to be rich himself, or to leave his Family so. He labours himself as he hath Ability and Opportunity. Godliness is his Gain, and serving CHRIST the Fruit of his Labours, and the End of his Life.

He may also be known BY HIS DOCTRINE.

He will not deny the Dignity of human Nature, as superior to the Brutal; but he insists much on its Depravity, Guilt, Pollution and Weakness, as knowing, that this is the Doctrine of the Gospel, and the Foundation of Conversation, and of all true Religion. *Rom. the second and third Chapters.* He



The UNFAITHFUL Minister.

HE undertakes the Work from Sloth, or Pride, or a Desire to live elegantly. He flatters the *Rich*, or *Great*, be they ever so *irreligious*, to get Preferment: And by soothing them in their Vices, espousing their *political* Schemes and Measures, or by other *sinful*, or *mean Compliances*, courts their *Patronage*. He contrives to preach and do as little as he can, and employs others to do the Work, allowing them little. *Ezek. xliv. 8.* Gain's his Godliness: He serves not the LORD CHRIST, but his own Belly, *Rom. xvi. 18.* and makes it his main Care to get as much of this World's Goods, and live as much at his Ease as he can. *Jer. xxiii. 1. Tim. vi. 5.*

He may also be known BY HIS DOCTRINE.

He dwells much on the Dignity and Perfection of human Nature; denies there is *Need* for any professing Christians (especially those who are not notoriously wicked) to be converted; and addresses to *all* his Hearers, as if they were real Christians, and Heirs of Heaven, *John ix. the latter End.* He

He insists much on the Necessity of divine Grace, and the Influence of the Holy Spirit, to enlighten Men's Understandings, convince them of their Guilt and Pollution, to shew them their Need of a Saviour, and of Repentance and Faith in him, and directs them to pray for this Spirit.
2 Tim. ii. 1. Phil. ii. 13.

He preaches CHRIST, his Person, Offices, atoning Blood, Merits and Intercession, as the Ground of our Hope of Pardon, Acceptance and eternal Life; yet strongly urges the Necessity of moral Duties and Obedience but chiefly by Motives taken from, and peculiar to the Gospel.
Tit. iii. 4---9. 1 Cor. 1st. pass.

He aims to detect the Hypocrite, and to expose the Formalist, to convince and awaken the self-deceiving Sinner; and knowing the Terrors of the LORD, he displays them in all their Force to persuade Men, setting them to search and try themselves; and he reproveth, rebukes, and exhorts, faithfully declaring the whole Counsel of GOD.
Acts xx.

He represents Religion as an inward experimental Thing, endeavours to bring Men to make Heart-work of it; recommends Self-examination, secret Prayer, constant Watchfulness, and
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He dwelleth much on the Power and Will of Man, denying, or seldom mentioning, the Aids of the Holy Spirit, extolleth the Merit of our own Works, and, in so doing, leds Men to expect Salvation by their own partial and imperfect Obedience. *John xv. 1---6.*

He seldom mentions CHRIST, or only as a Teacher, recommending *Virtue*, from the Motives, and in the Manner which a Heathen Philosopher would do, and does not appear fond of Scripture Language. The Faith he preaches is an Assent to the Truth of the Gospel, without relying on the Merits of it's blessed Author, and seeking Strength from his blessed Spirit. *1 Cor. ii. 2. and sim.*

He dwells on mere external Forms and Duties, coming to Church, receiving the Sacrament, being honest, sober, and charitable; but he is very sparing in setting before Men the Demerit of Sin, and the eternal Ruin which will follow it; prophesying smooth Things, and avoiding what would alarm and terrify. *2 Cor. v. 11.*

He reduces the Standard of Religion to the Relish and Practices of the present Day; says little of *inward* Religion, and those secret Affections and Exercises, of which GOD and CHRIST
are

an habitual Sense of GOD, in Order to obtain the Help of the Spirit to purify the Heart, regulate the Passions, and promote universal Holiness.
2 Cor. v. 20.

All his Aim and Bent is to save Souls, and he appears deeply serious and much in Earnest in all his Addresses to his Hearers: And he is no further solicitous to please, than as he may best edify them. *Gal. i. 10. Gal. iv. 19. 1 Cor. x. 33.*

The FAITHFUL Minister may also be known thus:

He is in Labours abundant, preaches often, catechises, according to CANON 50, and with all Gravity, Seriousness, and Affection, goes through the public Offices, so as to shew that his Heart is in his Work; and spends the rest of the *Sunday* in Reading, Meditation, Prayer, or religious Discourse in his Family. *Isa. lviii. 13. Acts xx. 31.*

He is diligent in his private Pastoral Work. Sensible of the Worth of Souls, he visits his Parish from House to House, where he has any Hopes of doing Good by such Visits, inquiring into their State: Whether they sanctify the Sabbath, teach their Children, maintain Family Prayer. He instructs the Ignorant, gives or lends them
good

are the immediate Objects. Self-denial, subduing their carnal Inclinations, Humility in its several Branches, and a Nonconformity to this World, are seldom urged by him--and even then, without descending to particular Cases, resting in Generals. 2 Cor. ii. 17. iv. 2.

His *chief Solitude* is to shew his Learning, or amuse his Hearers with something curious and entertaining; and he is cold and lifeless in addressing them on the most important Topics; so that he does not appear to be in Earnest. Tit. iii. 9.

The UNFAITHFUL Minister may also be known thus:

He does as little as he can, without laying himself open to Censure and Punishment. He is short, slight and superficial in his public Work; careless how it is done, soon weary of it, and glad when is finished: And spends the rest of the *Sunday* in vain Company and Conversation. 1 Tim. iv. 12. 16.

He is careless about private Inspection and Instruction; when he visits the Sick, hurries thro' the Form, without any serious warm Addresses to their Consciences. His Conversation with his Parish favours of the World and earthly Things, and he seeks not *them*, but *theirs*. 2 Cor. xii. 14. 15. 2 Tim. ii. 4.

good Books; endeavours, especially in Sickness, to make and cherish good Impressions on their Hearts; and watcheth for their Souls, as one that must give an Account. *Acts* xx. 20. *2 Tim.* iv. 2.

His general Temper and Behaviour is not only blameless and inoffensive, but has an evident Tincture of Piety and Zeal. He is grave in his Apparel and Language, self-denying, meek and contented, and charitable to the Poor. Religion appears in all his Converse; he shuns vain Company, and all the Places of fashionable Amusement, and makes it his governing Aim to adorn the Doctrine which he preacheth, and shine as a Light in the World. *1 Tim.* iv. 12. *Titus* i. 7--9.

His Behaviour to his Brethren is honourable. He is peaceable and moderate; loves those of every Denomination, who are peaceable and pious, wishes Success to their Labours, and rejoices that CHRIST is preached and Souls are saved, though by Ministers of different Sentiments and Persuasions from himself. *Phil.* i. 18. *Rom.* xiv. 1. *1 Tim.* ii. 24, 25.

*Note to this * Reference. See Page 4.*

† Every Minister at his Ordination is asked this Question by the Bishop at the Altar—"Do you trust, that you are inwardly moved by the HOLY GHOST to take upon you the Office? Do you think you are truly called according to the Will of CHRIST?"—And he answers in the Affirmative:

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He loves Sports and Amusements, is oftener seen in the Assemblies of Vanity than in the Church. He breaks through CANON 75. He loves the Company of the Sensual and Gay; or, if his Behaviour is regular and decent, there appears little of a devotional, zealous Spirit in him, and he spends that Time in literary Amusements or Idleness, which should be employed for the Service of his Flock. 1 *Tim.* iv. 13, 15. 2 *Tim.* ii. 16.

He often censures in public, and sneers in private his Brethren who have more Piety and Zeal than himself; calls them Enthusiasts, however rational they may be, or Methodists, however unconnected they may be with them, and does what he can to injure their Characters, and lessen their Esteem and Usefulness. *Third Epist. of St. John, Ver. 9 and 10.*

The Meaning of which solemn Question he ought therefore thoroughly to understand.—An eminent Casuist has unwarily declared [*See Ep. Saunderson in his Sermon on 1 Cor. vii. 24. Folio Edition*] that, He who has a due Regard to his Education, Abilities, and Inclination, may rest secure in his Conscience, that he has this inward Calling to the Ministry. Is not such an Assertion (and by so great and good a Man too) astonishing?—Is it scarcely credible (but so it is) that he should never so much as once mention Holiness as a Requisite.

In Order therefore to give the true Meaning of this important Question, let it be observed, that there are two Qualifications essentially necessary for all such, as are Candidates for Ordination; without which they cannot justly be said to have this inward Call, or to be moved by the HOLY GHOST.

I. One of which is eminent, and high Degrees of Love to CHRIST, and Zeal for his Glory, whose Commission they are to receive for feeding his Flock.—At the Restoration of St. PETER, he is thrice asked, “ Lovest thou me?” (*John* xxi. 15, 16, and 17.) and thus enjoin’d, “ Feed my Sheep—Feed my Lambs.” For Love is an active Principle kindled by the Holy Spirit. “ When thou art converted, *says our Saviour*, strengthen thy Brethren.”

II. The other Qualification (and an indispensable one it is) is a warm and affectionate Zeal for the Good and Salvation of Souls, whom CHRIST has purchased with his most precious Blood.

A Minister should not only have Qualities and Endowments to be outwardly tryed, and to be outwardly call’d, but he must likewise be conscious of the eternal Sanctity of his own Heart. He must have *Holiness* as well as *Education*, *Abilities* and *Inclination*.—The inward Motion, or Call to the Ministry, is the Work of God’s Holy Spirit, evidenced by its Fruits.—And the Question is, “ Do you trust that you are inwardly “ moved (or called) by the HOLY GHOST?”

It is to be wished that every Clergyman would at least every Quarter read over the Form of ordaining Priests and Deacons, and that their Hearers would likewise occasionally read it, that they may the better be enabled to judge how far their Ministers do, or do not act consistently with it.

THESE are the Out-lines, or general Marks and Evidences of FAITHFUL and UNFAITHFUL Ministers. It were easy to prove this by other apposite Texts of Scripture; but the Case lies plain before the Observation of every considerate Man. By this Sketch, Christians may judge of their Ministers, and see who are most worthy of Attention, Reverence and Esteem. There may be, and are, Differences in Sentiment about lesser Matters between faithful Ministers: But it is easy to see, who preach agreeably to the Gospel, and like Men in Earnest, giving themselves wholly to spiritual Concerns and the Care of their Parishes, as far as is consistent with necessary Avocations; and who preach only for Pay, and neglect the Souls committed to their Care.

Try therefore the Spirits, 1 *John* iv. 2. Adhere steadily to those Ministers who appear to be faithful and zealous, however their Brethren may despise or censure them, and earnestly pray to the LORD of the Harvest, that he would send forth many faithful active Labourers into his Harvest. See *Matth.* ix. 38.

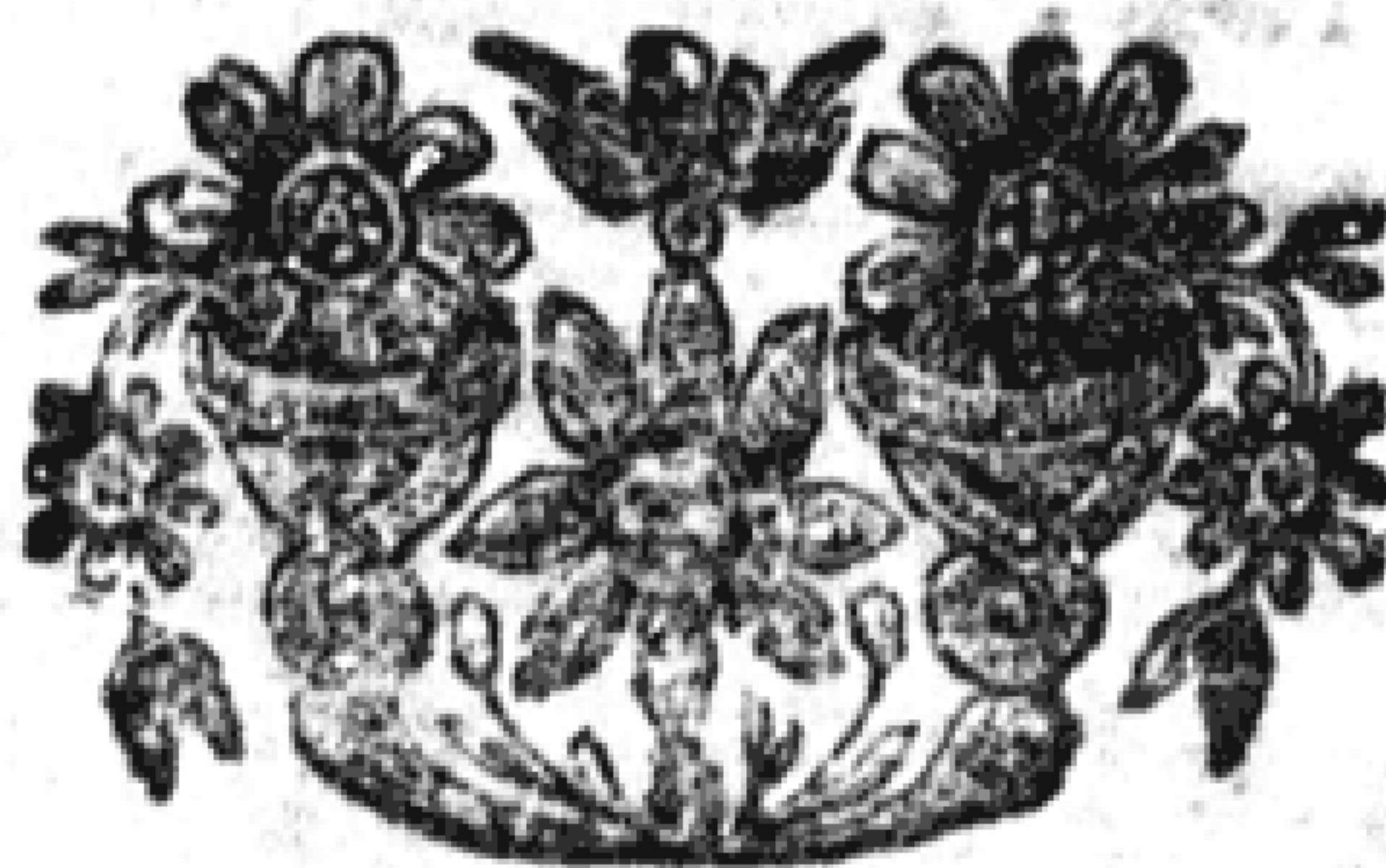
The following VERSES were composed by a Pious Clergyman in Virginia, who preaches to Seven Congregations, the nearest of which meets at the Distance of five Miles from his House, as he was returning Home in a very gloomy and rainy Night.

COME, heav'nly pensive Contemplation, come,
 Possess my Soul, and solemn Thoughts inspire,
 The sacred Hours, that with too swift a Wing
 Incessant hurry by, nor quite elaps'd,
 Demand a serious Close. Then be my Soul
 Sedate and solemn, as this Gloom of Night,
 That thickens round me. Free from Care, compos'd
 Be all my Soul, as this dread Solitude,
 Thro' which with gloomy Joy I make my Way.
 Above these Clouds, above the spacious Sky,
 In whose vast Arch these cloudy Oceans roll,
 Dispensing Fatness to the World below;
 There dwells The MAJESTY, whose single Hand
 Props universal Nature, and who deals
 His lib'ral Blessings to this little Globe,
 The Residence of Worms; where *Adam's* Sons,
 Thoughtless of him who taught their Souls to think,
 Ramble in vain Pursuits. The Hosts of Heav'n,
 Cherubs and Seraphs, Potentates and Thrones,
 Array'd in glorious Light, hover on Wing
 Before his Throne, and wait his sov'reign Nod:
 With active Zeal, with sacred Rapture fir'd,

To

To his extensive Empire's utmost Bound
 They bear his Orders, and his Charge perform;
 Yet he, ev'n he (ye Ministers of Flame,
 Admire the Condescension and the Grace!)
 Employs a Mortal, form'd of meanest Clay,
 Debas'd by Sin, whose best Desert is Hell;
 Employs him to proclaim a SAVIOUR'S Name,
 And offer Pardon to a rebel World.
 This Day my Tongue, the Glory of my Frame,
 Enjoy'd the Honour of his Advocate:
 Immortal Souls, of more transcendent Worth
 Than *Ophir*, or *Peru's* exhaustless Mines,
 Are trusted to my Care. Important Trust!
 What if some wretched Soul (tremendous Thought!)
 Once favour'd with the Gospel's joyful Sound,
 Now lost, for ever lost thro' my Neglect,
 In dire infernal Glooms, with flaming Tongue,
 Be heaping Execrations on my Head,
 Whilst here secure I dream my Life away!
 What if some Ghost, cut off from Life and Hope,
 With fierce despairing Eyes up-turn'd to Heav'n,
 That wildly stare, and witness Horrors huge,
 Be roaring horrid, "LORD, avenge my Blood
 On that un pitying Wretch, who saw me run
 Wit full Career the dire enchanting Road
 To these devouring Flames, yet warn'd me not;
 Or faintly warn'd me, and with languid Tone,
 And cool Harangue, denounced eternal Fire,
 And Wrath divine?" At the dread shocking Thought
 My Spirit shudders, and all my inmost Soul
 Trembles and shrinks. Sure, if the plaintive Cries
Of

Of Spirits reprobate can reach the Ear
 Of their Great JUDGE, they must be Cries like these.
 But if the meanest of the happy Choir,
 That with eternal Symphonies surround
 The heav'nly Throne, can stand, and thus declare,
 " I owe it to his Care that I am here,
 Next to Almighty Grace: His faithful Hand,
 Regardless of the Frowns he might incur,
 Snatch'd me, reluctant, from approaching Flames,
 Ready to catch, and burn unquenchable:
 May richest Grace reward his pious Zeal
 With some bright Mansion in this World of Bliss."
 Transporting Thought! Then blessed be the Hand
 That form'd my elemental Clay to Man,
 And still supports me. 'Tis worth while to live,
 If I may live to Purposes so great,
 Awake my dormant Zeal! For ever flame
 With gen'rous Ardors for immortal Souls;
 And may my Head, and Tongue, and Heart and all,
 Spend and be spent in Service so divine.



Collated -- Perfect, May 23, 1904.
 S. K. C.