

Unconverted Ministers by George Whitefield

~Other Speakers M-R: Old Paths Magazine - Issue 12:

Divine Warnings

The Lord enabled me to open my mouth boldly against unconverted ministers; to caution tutors to take care of their pupils; and also to advise ministers particularly to examine the experience of candidates for ordination. For I am verily persuaded the generality of preachers talk of an unknown and unfelt Christ; and the reason why congregations have been so dead is, because they have had dead men preaching to them. O that the Lord may quicken and revive them, for His own name's sake! For how can dead men beget living children? It is true, indeed, God may convert men by the devil, if He pleases, and so He may by unconverted ministers; but I believe He seldom makes use of either of them for this purpose. No, the Lord will choose vessels made meet by the operation of the blessed Spirit for His sacred use.

Strange Fire

Unspeakable freedom God gave me while treating on this head. In the afternoon, I preached on the Common to about fifteen thousand people. Just as I had finished my sermon, a note was put up to me, wherein I was desired to pray for a person just entered upon the ministry, but under apprehension that he was unconverted. God enabled me to pray for him with my whole heart; and I hope that note will teach many others not to run before they can give an account of their conversion. If they do, they offer God strange fire. He preached on Monday at Westfield and Springfield, and on Tuesday at Suffield, to large audiences, and with his usual power. At or near Suffield, he met with a minister, 'who said it was not absolutely necessary for a gospel minister to be converted'; meaning doubtless, that though conversion was necessary for his salvation, it was not indispensable to his ministerial character and usefulness. This interview gave Whitefield a subject, 'I insisted much in my discourse upon the change of the new birth, and also the necessity of a minister's being converted before he could preach Christ aright.

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The word came with great power, and a great impression was made upon the people in all parts of the assembly. Many ministers were present. I did not spare them. Most of them thanked me for my plain dealing. But one was offended; and so would more of his stamp if I were to continue long in New England. For unconverted ministers are the bane of the Christian Church.' At dinner, the Spirit of the Lord came upon me again, and enabled me to speak with such vigour against sending unconverted persons into the ministry, that two ministers, with tears in their eyes, publicly confessed, that they had laid their hands on young men, without so much as asking them whether they were born again of God or not. After dinner, finding my heart much enlarged, I prayed, and with such power, that most in the room were put under concern.
?George Whitefield (1714-1770) - Was used mightily of God in the Great Awakenings in America. Preached open-air to tens of thousands at once.