

How sad is it to see the church of God committed to the care of such that pretend to be teachers of others, that understand not what they say, or whereof they affirm. No marvel the peace of churches is broken, when their watchmen want skill to preserve their unity, which of all other things is as the church's walls; when they are divided, no wonder they crumble to atoms, if there is no skilful physician to heal them. It is sad when there is no balm in Gilead, and when there is no physician there. Hence it is, that the wounds of churches become incurable, like the wounds of God's people of old, either not healed at all, or else slightly healed, and to no purpose. May it not be said of many churches at this day, as God said of the church of Israel, That he sought for a man among them that should stand in the gap, and make up the breach; but he found none!

Remember what was said of old, Mal. ii. 7, The priest's lips preserve knowledge: and the people should seek the law at his mouth. But when this is wanting, the people will be stumbling, and departing from God and one another; therefore God complains, Hos. iv. 6, That his people were destroyed for want of knowledge; that is, for want of knowing guides; for if the light that is in them that teach be darkness, how great is that darkness! and if the blind lead the blind, no marvel both fall into the ditch.

How many are there that take upon them to teach others, that had need be taught in the beginning of religion; that instead of multiplying knowledge, multiply words without knowledge; and instead of making known God's counsel, darken counsel by words without knowledge? The apostle speaks of some that did more than darken counsel; for they wrested the counsel of God; 2 Pet. iii. 16. In Paul's epistles, saith he, "are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction." Some things in the Scriptures are hard to be known, and they are made harder by such unlearned teachers as utter their own notions by words without knowledge.

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