

late ourselves by events, and not by Divine commands, we must first know whether the conduct in question will do more good or harm. This rule is very uncertain, and must always be superseded by the authority of a Divine command. It can only be called in aid in matters of which the consequences are doubtful, and of such as are left entirely to our own discretion.

If even greater good should appear to be done, for a time, by following our own plans; yet a conduct not regulated by Divine authority, may bring on a course of events attended with irreparable mischief, far outweighing the present temporary advantage.

Further, when we allow ourselves to break through the order of Divine appointment, with the prospect of doing a greater good, we depart from that subordinate station in which Divine Providence has placed us. We take upon ourselves to direct, where we ought to obey. We disregard that express Divine prohibition of doing evil that good may come; and forget that sentence which the apostle has pronounced upon all who conduct themselves by such a principle, "whose damnation is just."

7. The charge of uncharitableness seems to deter many from entering upon the inquiry, whether any mode of Church government has exclusively the stamp of Divine authority. They see good men of all persuasions, and therefore think it needless to inquire, which form of Church government is most conformable to the plan laid down in Holy Scripture. They are also deterred from this investigation by the idea, that a claim to Divine authority in an affair concerning which good people are so much divided, would imply an uncharitable censure upon all who differ from ourselves.

True Christian charity will never deter us from the most strict inquiry into our duty. We are not to guide ourselves by the conduct of others, who have no greater claim to inspiration than ourselves.