

Roger Williams

The Hirelings Ministry None of Christ's

The two great Prophets of God's Revealed Council, Moses {the Servant} and Christ Jesus {the Lord} as they have both declared unto us a Creation, a Creator, the Shipwreck of Mankind, the Restoration, the Restorer, so have they both revealed unto us a visible Company of holy Worshippers of this one most glorious Creator and Redeemer, and that as for his own most glorious praise, so in opposition to all false gods, who also are attended with their visible worships and worshippers. In order to God's visible worship the Lord Jesus hath broken down the Wall of Division between the Jews and the rest of the Nations of the World, and sent forth his Ministers unto all Nations, to bring in {by the Gospel Proclamation} Proselytes, Converts, Disciples, and all such as should Eternally be saved, to begin that heavenly and eternal Communion in Heaven, here in an holy and visible Worship on the Earth. This going forth of the true Ministers of Christ Jesus is represented under the Figure of the white troopers in the opening of the first Seal where the Lord Jesus in his first Messengers rode forth upon the White horse, or Horses of the word of truth and meekness, {Psal.45:3,4,} conquering and to conquer the souls of Men. {Rev.6:2} From the 6th chapter of the Book of Revelation to the 19th, we hear no more of those white-horsemen, that is {as I conceive} of the Apostles or Messengers of Jesus Christ, {the whole stream of the intervening Prophecies, from the 6th to the 19th insinuating a total Routing of the Church and Ministry of Christ Jesus, put to flight, and retired into the Wilderness of Desolation. During this dreadful Apostasy and Desolation, the Lord hath not left the World without witnesses, but hath graciously and wonderfully stirred up his holy Prophets and Witnesses, such as {Huss, Wycliffe, Luther, Calvin...} who have as Witnesses prophesied and mourned in sack-cloth 1260 days or years {prophetically.} - This Testimony is probably near finished and the Saints by their late and yet following wars {I say probably} must enrage the Antichristian world, so far as to provoke the Nations, to their great and general slaughter, called the slaughter of the Witnesses. {Revelation Chapter 11} - No man ever did nor ever shall truly go forth to Convert the Nations, nor to Prophecy in the present state of Witness against Antichrist, but by the gracious Inspiration and Instigation of the Holy Spirit of God; according to I Corinthians, chapter 12, where the Holy Spirit discoursing of those three {gifts, administrations, and operations,} tells us that "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit;" and, Revelation, chapter 11, which states that the Lord himself "will give power" to his two Witnesses, &c. I know no other True Sender, but the most Holy Spirit; and when he sends, his Messengers will go, his Prophets will Prophecy, though the entire World should forbid them. From the former Conclusions we may first see upon what a false 'sent' or 'word' our fathers and ourselves have run as to the true Ministry appointed by Christ Jesus. How many thousands of Pretenders have been and are {Protestants and Papists} gone forth to that Grand Commission, {Matt.28,} "Go into all Nations, Teach and Baptize, &c?" In the poor small span of my life, I desired to have been a diligent and constant Observer, and have been myself many ways engaged, in City, in Country, in Court, in Schools, in Universities, in Churches, in Old and New-England, and yet cannot in the holy presence of God bring in the result of a satisfying discovery, that either

the Begetting Ministry of the Apostles or Messengers to the Nations, or the Feeding and Nourishing Ministry of Pastors and Teachers, according to the first Institution of the Lord Jesus Christ are yet restored and extant. It may then be said, what is that Ministry that hath been extant since Luther and Calvin's time, especially what is that Ministry that hath been Instrumental in the hand of the Lord, to the conversion of thousands? I answer, that the Ministry of Prophets or Witnesses, standing with Christ Jesus, against his great enemy and rival Antichrist. The whole Books of Martyrs {or Witnesses} is nothing else but a large Commentary or History of the Ministry of Witnesses, during all the Reign of the Beast to this day. Examine their Witnesses in two Particulars. 1. Negatively, wherein they witnessed against the False, against the Usurpations and Abominations of Antichrist; and therein they were the Infallible Witnesses, and Prophets of Christ Jesus, preaching and oft times suffering to the Death for his Names sake. Next, view them in their Positive Practice and Worships, as they have assumed and pretended to such and such Ministries, and Titles, and Churches, and Ministrations, and there is not one of them, no not Calvin himself {the greatest Pretender to Church-Order} but the Father of Lights, in our times of Light, hath been graciously pleased to discover their great mistakes, and wanderings from the first Pattern and Institutions of Christ Jesus. - Wherein hath the former and latter Ministry been defective? I answer; in their callings and wages. Some plead their Succession from the Apostles or Messengers, yet are they forced to run into the Tents of Antichrist, and to plead Succession from Rome, and neither such nor others which plead their Calling from the People, can prove to my conscience, from the testimony of Christ Jesus, that either, Christ's succession did run in an Antichristian line, or that two or three godly persons might first make themselves a church, and then make their Ministers, without a preceding Ministry from Christ Jesus unto them, to gather, and to guide them in such their Administrations. - In their Wages, whether by tithes or otherwise, they have always run in the way of an Hire, and rendered such Workmen absolute Hirelings between whom and the true Shepherd {John, chapter 10,} the Lord Jesus puts so express and sharp a Difference; so that in all humble submission, I am bold to maintain, that it is one of the grand Designs of the Most High, to break down the Hireling Ministry, that trade, faculty, calling and living, by Preaching, and that if all the Princes, States, Parliaments and Armies in the world should join their Heads and Hearts and Arms and Shoulders to support it, yet being a part of Babel and Confusion, it shall sink as a Mil-stone from the Angels hand into the deeps forever. - Objection: But is not the Laborer worthy of his Reward? I answer, there is no Reward {by infinite degrees} comparable to an hundred fold {though with persecution} in this Life, and in the world to come eternal life, to all that deny themselves in this Life, and do, and teach, and suffer for the name of the Son of God. More strictly and particularly I answer; he that makes a Trade of Preaching, that makes the cure of Souls, and the charge of men's eternal welfare, a trade, a maintenance, and living, and that explicitly a covenant or bargain, I am humbly confident to maintain, that the Son of God never sent such a one to be a Laborer in his Vineyard. Such motions spring not from the living and voluntary spring of the Holy Spirit of God, but from the artificial and worldly respects of Money, Maintenance, &c. - As to the Laborer worthy of his Reward, I answer, that we find no other pattern in the Testament of Christ Jesus, but that both the Converting {or Apostolical Ministry,} and the Feeding {or Pastoral Ministry,} did freely serve or minister, and yet were freely supported by the Saints and Churches, and that not in stinted Wages, Tithes, Stipends, Salaries, &c., but with larger or lesser supplies, as the Hand of the Lord was more or less extended in his weekly

blessings on them. When either through poverty or neglect, support and maintenance failed, yet still they eyed {as Sea men and Soldiers say} the Good of the Voyage and the Battle {the common Cause of the Lord Jesus} and their own hands day and night, supplied their own and others necessities. And this was and will be the only way of the Laborers of the Son of God. Objection: The Priests and Levites under the Law had settled and constant Maintenance. I answer; blessed be the Father of Lights who hath shown his people of late times, the great difference between the stated and settled National Church, the Ministry, and maintenance thereof, and the ordinary, afflicted, tested & tried state of the Church, and Churches of Christ Jesus all the world over. Objection: Although it be granted that the Hireling Ministry, both explicit and implicit, is none of Christ's, yet this is wonderful, what should be the reason why so much good hath been wrought thereby, as the conversion of thousands? I answer; all the wisdom, mercy, goodness, and piety that is in us, is but a drop to the Ocean of that which is in the Father of mercies, who with infinite pity and patience passeth by the ignorance and weaknesses of his Children. Hence Luther and other Monks, Cranmer and other Bishops, Calvin and other Presbyterians, God hath graciously covered their failings, and accepted {in Christ} his own Grace of sincere Desires, good Affections and Endeavors, though many ways defiled with sin. - There is but one God, Lord and Spirit, from whom those Gifts, Administrations and Operations proceed, {I Cor.12,} without whose holy and heavenly concurrence in all those three, both Gifts and Administrations and Operations, instead of Glorifying the name of Christ, and delivering Souls, do but Blaspheme his Name, and grieve his Spirit, and hinder and harden poor souls against Repentance. - Where, {and if,} God hath been pleased to bring nigh one soul to Himself by the Hireling Ministry, many more have been brought near by the voluntary and more single preachings of some, whether public or private; by the endeavor of private Christians, by the reading of the holy Scriptures, by godly examples, by afflictions, &c. Hence woeful experience hath made it evident, that many excellent men {in their own persons,} have labored a score of years and more, in an Hireling way, without the birth of one child to God; while others singly out of Love to Christ Jesus, have despised Bargains and Hire, and been more abundantly blest with merciful success and fruitfulness. Hence sure it is that there have been and are many excellent Prophets and Witnesses of Christ Jesus, who never entered {as they say} into the Ministry, to wit, Lawyers, Physicians, Soldiers, Tradesmen, and others of higher and lower rank, who by God's Holy Spirit {breathing on their meditations of the Holy Scriptures, and other private helps} have attained and much improved, an excellent spirit of knowledge, and utterance in the holy things of Jesus Christ, which spirit they ought to cherish, and further to improve, to the praise of Christ. Amongst so many Instances {dead and living} to the everlasting praise of Christ Jesus, and of his Holy Spirit, breathing and blessing where he listeth, I cannot but with honorable Testimony remember that Eminent Christian, Witness, & Prophet of Christ, even that despised and yet beloved Samuel How, {Samuel How, author of "The sufficiency of the Spirit's teaching without human learning; a treatise tending to prove human learning to be no help to the spiritual understanding of the word of God." 1639,} who being by calling a Cobbler, and without human Learning, {which yet in its sphere and place he honored,} who yet I say, by searching the holy Scriptures, grew so excellent a Textuary or Scripture learned man, that few of those high Rabbis that scorn to mend or make a shoe, could aptly and readily from the Holy Scripture outgo him. And however {through the oppressions upon some men's Consciences, even in Life and Death, and after death in respect of burying, as yet unthought

and unremedied,} I say, however he was forced to seek a grave or bed in the very Highway, yet was his life, death and burial, being attended with many hundreds of God's people, honorable, and how much more his Rising again, glorious. - The Church and people of God since the Apostasy, is an Army routed, and can hardly preserve and secure itself, much less subdue and conquer others, like a vessel becalmed at Sea, which though it make some way by rowing and towing, yet not comparable to what it doth when the mighty gales of God's Holy Spirit breathe {as in former days,} in the ways of his own most holy Appointments. We may see a grave mistake as touching that great point of Conversion: There is a great breathing in the souls of God's people after the Conversion of the English, Irish, Jews, Indians, and blessed be God for those breathings; yet doubtless, the first great work is the bringing of the Saints out of Babel, or confused worships, and the downfall of the Papacy, after the witnesses slaughtered. Hence it is probably conceived by some, {upon the testimony of Revelation, chapter 15,} that until the Vials be poured forth upon Antichrist, the smoke so filleth the Temple, that no man, that is {few of the Jews or Gentiles} shall by conversion enter in. Some will say, have there not been great and mighty conversions of whole Nations; England, Scotland, French, Dutch, &c. from Popery to be good Protestants? I answer; if the Holy Scripture, the first pattern, and doleful experience may be judge as to the point of true Conversion, and Regeneration by God's Spirit, who can deny but that the body of this and of all other Protestant Nations {as well as Popish} are unconverted, and {as formerly} ready to be converted and turned forward and backward, as the Weather-cock, according as the powerful wind of a prevailing {antichrist spirit,} Sword and Authority, shall blow from the various points and quarters of it. - We may hence see our great mistakes, both of our selves & our Fore-fathers, as to the pretended Seed-plots and Seminaries for the Ministry, the Universities of Europe, and the Universities of this Nation, for although I heartily acknowledge that among all the outward gifts of God, human learning and the knowledge of Languages and good Arts are excellent and excel other outward gifts, as far as light excels darkness, and therefore that Schools of human learning, ought to be maintained, in a due way and cherished; yet notwithstanding, in ministerial ordinations, as to the ministry of Christ Jesus, {any one of those ministries, Eph.4. & I Cor.12,} upon a due survey of their Institutions and continual practices compared with the last will and testament of Christ Jesus, they will be found to be none of Christ's, and that in many respects. First; as to the name Scholar, although as to human learning, many ways lawful, yet as it is appropriated to such as practice the Ministry, and have been at the Universities; {as they say;} it is a sacrilegious and thievish title, robbing all believers and saints, who are frequently in the Testament of Christ, styled Disciples or Scholars of Christ Jesus, and only they as Believers, and this title is so much theirs, that both men and women believing were called Disciples & Scholars. Secondly; as to their Monkish and idle course of life, partly so genteel and stately, partly so vain and superstitious, that to wet a finger in any pains or labor is a disgraceful and an unworthy act; but consider that the Church is built upon the Foundation of the Apostles & Prophets, who were Laborers, Fishermen, Tent-makers, &c., and I cannot but conceive, that although it should not please the most holy and jealous God to stir up this renowned State, and their renowned Cromwell {the 2nd} to deal with our refined Monasteries, as that blessed Cromwell the first, {Thomas Cromwell, 1st Earl of Essex, 1485-1540. In 1538 Cromwell spearheaded an extensive campaign against Popish Idolatry & Superstition. In 1539 he was instrumental in the publication of the 'Great Bible,' the first authoritative version in English. Soon thereafter he was condemned to

death, for treason and heresy, without trial, and beheaded on Tower Hill on 28 July 1540; after the execution, his head was set on a spike on London Bridge,} did with the more gross and palpably superstitious in the days of Henry the Eighth; yet in his time the Lord Jesus whose is all power in Heaven and Earth will spew out these Seminaries of Hirelings, and mystical Merchants out of his mouth, as he hath done their Fathers the superstitious and bloody Bishops before them. Thirdly; as to their Popish and vaunting titles, so strange from the New Testament and language of Christ Jesus, or any word of title that came forth of his blessed mouth, Bachelors of Divinity, Doctor of Divinity, so clearly and expressly opposite to the command of the Lord Jesus; "call no man Father, Doctor, &c.," that is, by way of eminency in spiritual and heavenly regards, Rabbi, Rabbi, Doctor, Doctor, &c. I omit {because possibly for shame left off in these days} their childish ceremonies {used even by the most 'holy' and conscientious} in their superstitious inaugurations, &c., their holy gowns, holy vestments, holy caps, holy scarfs, holy rings; yea, and holy boots also, &c., all as far from the purity and simplicity of the Son of God, as far as the honest attire of some sober and chaste matron, from the wanton and flaunting vanities of some painted Harlot. Fourthly; as to their {pretended} spiritual and holy exercises proper only to the Churches and Assemblies of the Saints, the only Schools of the Prophets appointed by Christ Jesus. How have they been by Courts imposed upon every natural and unspiritual man, who {in Truth} perceives not the things that be of God; how have they been prostituted to every profane and unclean lip; unto whom saith God, "What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?" {Ps.50:16} Fifthly; as to their being prepared and fitted by these means, as in a way of apprenticeship, to set up the Trade and way of Preaching, the science or faculty of Spiritual merchandizing, {Revelation, chapter 18 in a deep Mystery,} of all sorts of spices and precious things, the precious sweet Truths and Promises of Holy Scripture; yea, {which we may with holy trembling add,} a trade of selling God himself, Christ Jesus, the Holy Spirit, Heaven and Hell, and {all too often} their own Souls, and the Souls of thousands. - Objection: But have there not come excellent men from thence, famous for learning, holiness, labors, success in the souls of thousands? Answer; I say, that there have been excellent men; famous Prophets and Witnesses of Christ Jesus; yea, they have sealed the holy Truths of God, which they have learned from the Holy Scriptures, and which they have declared to others, I say they have sealed them with their heart blood, but that is no justification of their evil standings, institutions, administrations, &c., which {as by degrees it hath pleased the Father of Lights to discover unto them} they have come out of such bondage with shame and sorrow, and labored after the purity and simplicity of the Son of God. Question: But since extraordinary gifts be ceased, how shall now the people of this Nation be supplied with Ministers, but from such Seminaries of Learning, which fit men both with Learning to know and Eloquence to utter the heavenly Mysteries; or would you have the people be of no Religion at all, mere Atheists, without God, without his Word, without a Ministry? I answer; it is true, that those glorious first ministerial gifts are ceased, and that is, or should be the lamentation of all Saints; namely, the desolation and widow-hood of Zion; yet I humbly conceive that without those gifts, it is no ground of imitation, and of going forth to teach and baptize the Nations, for the Apostles themselves did not attempt that mighty enterprise, but waited at Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit descended on them, and enabled them for that mighty work; least of all is that a ground of counterfeiting, and of suborning a liveliness picture of that first Ministry {like Jeroboams Institutions, I Kings 13:33 &c.,} when everyone that hath friends may be

preferred to Fellowships in Colleges, to the superstitious Degrees and Titles of Divinity, {as they call it,} and by these stairs ascend up the Gospel preferments of rich and honorable benefices. Secondly; far be it from me to derogate from that honorable civility of training up of youth in Languages, and other human Learning, whether in the City of London, or other Towns and Cities, &c.; all that I bear witness against, is the counterfeiting and sacrilegious arrogating of the titles and rights of God's Saints and Churches {as before} which are the only Schools of the Prophets; as also against their sacrilegious and superstitious Degrees {as they call them} in the profession of Divinity, as if they only knew Divinity, Godliness, Holiness, and by such skill in godliness, and by such Degrees might succeed the ancient Scribes and Pharisees in the uppermost seats in Synagogues and Feasts, in Reverend titles and salutations, as the only Masters and Teachers of religion and godliness, and all this in the way of the Hireling. Thirdly; in all humble reverence and due submission to the Higher Powers, I affirm, there was never merely Civil State in the World {for that of the Jews was mixed and Ceremonial} that ever did or ever shall make good work of it, with a civil sword in spiritual matters, and therefore have but built and pluckt down, planted and pluckt up, Churches, Ministries, Disciplines, &c. - It is true, I do absolutely deny it {against all comers} to be the Burden of the Civil State to take cognizance of any Spiritual cause; and I do positively assert it, to be the proper and alone work of the holy Son and Spirit of God in the hands of his Saints and Prophets, to manage Heavenly and Spiritual causes, and that only with Spiritual Weapons against Spiritual Oppositions. And therefore that the Higher Powers have been constantly deceived by the Mercenary and Hireling Ministry; who being themselves deceived, deceive; and flop about {as the Wind, and Time, and Advantage blows} from Popery to Protestantism; from Protestantism to Popery; from Popery to Protestantism again! From Prelacy to Presbytery; from Presbytery to Independency; and perhaps again to Presbytery and Prelacy, if not to Popery {in some cases} rather than lose {as they say} the Liberty of Preaching. But what that loss is of somewhat else {gain, honor, &c.,} let themselves, and all men, judge impartially in the fear of God. - I furthermore acknowledge with thankfulness, that many heavenly spirits, in King Edwards, and Queen Elizabeth's days, and since that, have been forming and reforming the states and nations, Religion, Worship, Ministry, &c. Doubtless Intentions were holy, {as David's,} labors great, and God's mercy, pity and patience infinite; yet experience long and ever hath told us that there was never a Nation yet born in a day to God; that the bodies of all Nations is a part of the world, and although the Holy Spirit of God, in every Nation where the Word comes, washes white some of a darkened complexion, and changeth some Leopards spots, yet the bodies and bulks of Nations cannot by all the Acts and Statutes under heaven, put off the Ethiopian skin, or the Leopard spots, &c. {Jer.13:23} O why then should the wisdom of so many Ages, still each after other, be preached {by the prevailing Hirelings of each time, again and again} into the self-same delusion of changing the Ethiopian's skin or removing the leopard's spots? - Objection - Grant the bodies of the Nations to be but natural, but civil, and therefore cannot without the changings of God's Spirit be possibly fit as spiritual flocks of sheep, for spiritual pastors or shepherds to feed and build them up with the spiritual Ordinance of Christ Jesus? Yet, need they not a converting or begetting ministry of Christ Jesus, to preach Repentance to them, to spiritualize and change them? And if so, where shall ten thousand Ministers be had to go to {about} that number of Parishes in England, without the constant supplies of the seed-plots of Seminaries, the Universities of the Nation? I answer; first, there are great Disputes among God's people whether Apostles

or Messengers sent out to teach and baptize, that is, to Convert the Nations, be yet an Ordinance of Christ Jesus continued, or being extraordinary ceased? There is a great dispute whether the Ministry of the twelve {Matt.10,} or of the 70, {Lk.10,} be continued since they both had an immediate call from Christ. And secondly; such excellent gifts, abilities, and furniture from Christ, which now we find none are furnished with, as healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out Devils, &c. Further, whether all these gifts and administrations, {Eph.4, & I Cor.12,} are to be expected? For myself; I am certain that the Ministry or Service of Prophets, and Witnesses, mourning and prophesying in Sack-cloth, God hath immediately stirred up and continued all along the reign of the Beast and Antichrist of Rome. This Witness is {probably} near finished, and the bloody storm of the slaughter of the Witnesses is yet to be expected and prepared for; but this, and the time, and many passages of Revelation chapter eleven are Controversial, and something like that of Christ's expected personal presence, the state of the New Jerusalem, the New Heavens and Earth, &c. However this is clear, that all that are endued with spiritual or temporal Talents, must lay them out for their Lord and Master, for his Glory and Advantage alone. That, all {of what rank soever} that have knowledge and utterance of heavenly Mysteries, and therein are the Lord's Prophets & Witnesses against Antichrist, must Prophecy against false Christ's, false Faith, false Love, false Joy, false Worship, and Ministrations, false Hope, and false Heaven, which poor souls in a golden dream expect and look for. This Prophecy ought to be {chiefly} exercised among the Saints in the companies, meetings, and assemblies of the fellow-mourners, and witnesses against the falsehoods of Antichrist; for the first grand Design of Christ Jesus is to destroy and consume his Mortal enemy Antichrist, and this must be done by the breath of his Mouth in his Prophets and Witnesses. - Overall, the Lord Jesus Christ hath not forgotten to be infinitely Faithfull, and infinitely Wise and Tender to the Souls of his Chosen, but hath in all Ages, and in all Conditions and Changes of his Spouse, stirred up by his Holy Spirit, and sent such Voluntary Laborers into his Vineyard, and so will, as have been, and shall be abundantly sufficient for this Nation and all Nations, as may best suit the Holy ends and Periods of his Time and Kingdom. Roger Williams, 1652. Selected & Extracted from his work entitled, "The Hirelings Ministry None of Christ's" printed in 1652.