

**CHRIST'S WARNING TO THE CHURCHES,  
TO BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS, WHO  
COME AS WOLVES IN  
SHEEP'S CLOTHING: AND THE MARKS BY  
WHICH THEY ARE KNOWN. ILLUSTRATED  
IN TWO DISCOURSES**

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Christ's Warning to the Churches, to Beware of False Prophets, Who Come as Wolves in Sheep's Clothing: And the Marks by Which They Are Known. Illustrated in Two Discourses by Joseph Lathrop

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**JOSEPH LATHROP**

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DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO WIT:

**BE IT REMEMBERED**, That on the tenth day of December A. D. 1810, and in the thirty-fifth year of the Independence of the United States of America, **ISAIAH THOMAS**, jun. of the said District, has deposited in this Office the Title of a Book, the Right whereof he claims as Proprietor in the words following, to wit: "CHRIST'S WARNING to the CHURCHES, to beware of False Prophets, who come as wolves in sheep's clothing: and the marks by which they are known: illustrated in ten Discourses, with an Appendix. By **JOSEPH LATHROP**, D. D. Pastor of the First Church in West-Springfield. There were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you—And many shall follow their pernicious ways.—Apostle Peter.—Eleventh Edition, revised, corrected and much enlarged".

In Conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, intitled, "An Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by securing the Copies of Maps, Charts and Books, to the Authors and Proprietors of such Copies, during the Times therein mentioned;" and also to an Act intitled, "An Act supplementary to an Act, intitled, An Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by securing the Copies of Maps, Charts and Books, to the Authors and Proprietors of such Copies during the times therein mentioned; and extending the benefits thereof to the Arts of Designing, Engraving and Etching Historical, and other Prints."

**WILLIAM S. SHAW**, { Clerk of the District  
of Massachusetts.

## PREFACE.

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*It has been a conjecture of some, who have read the former editions of the following discourses, that the author has a special view to certain sects, as Methodists and Baptists; and aimed to place them in an odious light. But the conjecture is unfounded. He had no particular view to these, or any other denomination; but a general view to disorderly teachers of all denominations.*

*The discourses were written and preached, when methodists were scarcely known in this part of the country, and when baptists were little distinguished by the intemperance of their zeal for proselytism, and when neither of them attempted to make divisions among his people.*

*Curiosity will perhaps ask, what then was the occasion of the discourses? It was this:*

*Towards the end of the year 1780, when the author was in a low state of health, there came into his parish a foreigner, who professed to have been a settled minister in England, and to be one of our denomination. He brought with him no credentials; but assigned, as a cause of the omission, the precipitancy of his flight from his country to escape the rage of political persecution, to which he was become obnoxious by his active zeal and mighty influence in support of the American cause against the British ministry. He called himself a disciple of Whitefield, talked much about his conversion, made great pretensions to piety, and expressed an ardent affection for the people of the authors charge in their destitute condition. In a man of so much piety, patriotism and benevolence the want of credentials was easily excused. He was invited to supply the pulpit for a time, to which he readily consented. He not only preached on the sabbath, but also appointed frequent lectures*

*and evening conferences in different parts of the parish, and acted as officially, as if he had been the stated minister. He labored to dis-affect the minds of the people to their minister, and reviled all standing ministers—taught that every saint had a right to preach, if he could find hearers—that saints certainly knew each others hearts—that all whom they could not fellowship, were unregenerate—that the church ought to admit none to her communion, but those whom she knew to be real converts, and none ought to come to the communion, but those, who knew themselves to be such—that there were unregenerate persons in the church, from whom the regenerate ought to withdraw—that in scripture, beside the literal sense, there was a mystical or spiritual sense, which none but saints vnderstood, and which was immediately communicated to them by the spirit of God, &c. &c.*

*After a few sabbaths the people were generally dissatisfied with their new preacher ; and the dissatisfaction became so apparant, that he left the pulpit, and set up a private meet-*



*ing, at which a small number attended for a short time. But he proceeded not far, for his folly was made manifest to all men; and he withdrew, and went where he could find a place.*

*As soon as the author had recovered such a measure of health as to resume his public labors, he endeavored to correct the erroneous sentiments, which some had imbibed on the subjects before mentioned, and with which some serious minds seemed to be perplexed. Among other discourses relative to those subjects, he delivered the two which here follow, on "Christ's warning to beware of false prophets." They were heard with seriousness, and followed with happy effects.*

*As it was thought that the subject was growing more important in the country; that many had paid little attention to it; and that some were in danger of being misled by designing men, the author, on advice of his brethren in the ministry, and at the request of his people, consented to their publication. And as they have passed through several large*

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*editions, he hopes they have been useful abroad, as well as among the people of his own charge. The sermons on the other subjects alluded to, were published, and most of them are inserted in his volumes lately republished.*

Westspringfield, August, 1910.

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