

CORRUPTION

OR

DEPRAVATION OF THE MIND

BY SIN.

CHAP. III.

Contempt and corruption of the doctrine of regeneration. All men in the world regenerate or unregenerate. General description of corrupted nature. Depravation of the mind. Darkness upon it. The nature of spiritual darkness. Reduced into two heads of darkness objective. How removed. Of darkness subjective, its nature and power; proved; Eph. iv. 17, 18. opened; applied. The mind alienated from the life of God. The life of God what it is. The power of the mind, with respect unto spiritual things, examined. 1 Cor. ii. 14. opened. Πνευμάτος ἀνθρώπου, or the natural man, who. Spiritual things, what they are. How the natural man cannot know or receive spiritual things. Difference between understanding doctrines, and receiving of things. A twofold power and ability of mind, with respect unto spiritual things, explained. Reasons why a natural man cannot discern spiritual things. How and wherefore spiritual things are foolishness to natural men. Why natural men cannot receive the things of God. A double impotency in the mind of man by nature. 1 Cor. ii. 14. farther vindicated. Power of darkness in persons unregenerate. The mind filled with wills or lusts, and enmity thereby. The power and efficacy of spiritual darkness at large declared.

WE have, I hope, made our way plain for the due consideration of the great work of the Spirit in the regeneration of the souls of God's elect. This is that, whereby he forms the members of the mystical body of Christ, and prepares *living stones* for the building of a temple, wherein the living God will dwell. Now, that we may not only declare the truth in this matter, but also vindicate it from those corruptions wherewith some have endeavoured to debauch it, I shall premise a description lately given of it, with confidence enough, and it may be not without too much authority. And it is in these words; 'What is it to be born again, and to have a new spiritual life in Christ, but to become sincere proselytes to the gospel; to renounce all vi-

cious customs and practices, and to give an upright and uniform obedience to all the laws of Christ; and, therefore, if they are all but precepts of moral virtue, to be born again, and to have a new spiritual life, is only to become a new moral man. But their account (speaking of nonconformist ministers) of this article, is so wild and fantastic, that had I nothing else to make good my charge against them, that alone would be more than enough to expose the prodigious folly of their spiritual divinity;’ pp. 343, 344. I confess, these are the words of one, who seems not much to consider what he says, so as that it may serve his present turn, in reviling and reproaching other men. For he considers not, that by this description of it, he utterly excludes the baptismal regeneration of infants, which is so plainly professed by the church wherein he is dignified. But this is publicly declared, avowed, and vended, as allowed doctrine amongst us, and therefore deserves to be noticed, though the person that gives it out, be at irreconcilable feuds with himself and his church. Of morality and grace, an account shall be given elsewhere. At present, the work of regeneration is that which is under our consideration. And concerning this, those so severely treated, teach no other doctrine, but what, for the substance of it, is received in all the reformed churches in Europe, and which so many learned divines of the church of England confirmed with their suffrage at the synod of Dort. Whether this deserves all the scorn which this haughty person pours upon it by his swelling words of vanity, will to indifferent persons be made appear in the ensuing discourse; as also what is to be thought of the description of it given by that author, which, whether it savour more of ignorance and folly, or of pride and fulsome errors, is hard to determine. I know some words in it, are used with the old Pelagian trick of ambiguity, so as to be capable of having another sense and interpretation put upon them, than their present use and design will admit of. But that artifice will be immediately rendered useless.

There is a two-fold state of men with respect unto God, which is comprehensive of all individuals in the world. For all men are either unregenerate, or regenerate. There being an affirmation and a negation concerning the state of regeneration in the Scripture, one of them may be used concern-

ing every capable subject; every man living is so, or he is not so; and herein, as I suppose, there is a general consent of Christians. Again, it is evident in the Scripture, and we have proved it in our way, that all men are born in an unregenerate condition. This is so positively declared by our Saviour, that there is no rising up against it. John iii. 3—8. Now regeneration being the delivery of men (or the means of it) from that state and condition wherein they are born; or are by nature, we cannot discover wherein it doth consist, without a declaration of that state which it gives us deliverance from. And this in the first place we shall insist upon at large, giving an account of the state of lapsed nature under a loss of the original grace of God. And these things I shall handle practically for the edification of all sorts of believers, and not in the way and method of the schools, which yet shall be done elsewhere.

In the declaration of the state of corrupted nature after the fall, and before the reparation of it by the grace of Jesus Christ, that is, the effectual operation of the Holy Spirit, the Scripture principally insists on three things^a. 1. The corruption and depravation of the *mind*; which it calls by the name of *darkness*, and *blindness*, with the consequents of vanity, ignorance, and folly. 2. The depravation of the *will* and *affections*, which it expresseth several ways, as by *weakness* or *impotency*, and *stubbornness* or *obstinacy*. 3. By the general name of *death*, extended to the condition of the whole soul; and these have various effects and consequences, as in our explanation of them will appear.

I. All men by nature not enlightened, not renewed in their minds by the saving effectual operation of the Holy Spirit, are in a *state of darkness* and *blindness*, with respect unto God and spiritual things, with the way of pleasing him, and living unto him. Be men otherwise, and in other things never so wise, knowing, learned, and skilful; in spiritual things they are dark, blind, ignorant, unless they are renewed in the spirit of their minds by the Holy Ghost. This is a matter which the world cannot endure to hear of,

^a Dico veterem Nativitatem atque adeo omnes vires naturæ, qua naturali propagatione transfunduntur in sobolem in scriptura damnari; maledictam cordis nostri imaginationem, rationem, os, manus, pedes peccato et tenebris involuta in nobis omnia. Johan. Ferus in Evang. Joh. cap. i. v. 23. Fide perditâ sperelicta, intelligentia obcæcata, Voluntate captiva, homo quo in se repareter non invenit. de Vocat. Gent. l. 7. c. 3.

and is ready to fall into a tumult upon its mention. They think it but an artifice which some weak men have got, to reflect on and condemn them who are wiser than themselves. On the like occasion did the Pharisees ask of our Saviour that question with pride and scorn; 'Are we blind also?' John ix. 40. But as he lets them know, that their presumption of light and knowledge would serve only to aggravate their sin and condemnation, ver. 41. so he plainly tells them, that notwithstanding all their boasting, 'they had not heard the voice of God at any time, nor seen his shape;' John v. 37.

Some at present talk much about the power of the *intellectual faculties* of our souls, as though they were neither debased, corrupted, impaired, nor depraved. All that disadvantage which is befallen our nature by the entrance of sin, is but in the disorder of the affections, and the inferior sensitive parts of the soul, which are apt to tumultuate and rebel against that pure untainted light which is in the mind. And this they speak of it, without respect unto its renovation by the Holy Spirit; for if they include that also, they are in their discourses most notorious confused triflers. Indeed some of them write, as if they had never deigned once to consult with the Scriptures, and others are plainly gone over into the tents of the Pelagians. But setting aside their modern artifices, of confident boasting, contemptuous reproaches, and scurrilous railings, it is no difficult undertaking, so to demonstrate the depravation of the minds of men by nature, and their impotency thence to discern spiritual things in a spiritual manner^b, without a saving effectual work of the Holy Spirit in their renovation; as that the proudest and most petulant of them shall not be able to return any thing of a solid answer thereunto. And herein we plead for nothing but the known doctrine of the ancient catholic church, declared in the writings of the most learned fathers and determinations of councils against the Pelagians, whose errors and heresies are again revived among us, by a crew of Socinianized Arminians.

We may to this purpose first consider the testimonies given in the Scripture unto the assertion as laid down in general; Matt. iv. 16. 'The people which sat in darkness

^b Si quis per naturæ vigorem evangelizanti predicationi nos consentire posse confirmet absque illuminatione Spiritus Sancti; hæretico fallitur Spiritu. Conc. Arausic. 2 Can. 7.

saw great light, and to them that sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up.' Of what kind this darkness was in particular shall be afterward declared. For the present it answers what is proposed, that before the illumination given them by the preaching of the gospel, the people mentioned 'sat in darkness,' or lived under the power of it. And such as was the light whereby they were relieved, of the same kind was the darkness under which they were detained. And in the same sense, when Christ preached the gospel, 'the light shined into darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not;' John i. 5. gave not place to the light of the truth declared by him, that it might be received in the souls of men. The commission which he gave to Paul the apostle when he sent him to preach the gospel, was 'to open the eyes of men, and to turn them from darkness to light;' Acts xxvi. 18. not a light within them; for internal light is the eye, or seeing of the soul. But the darkness was such as consisted in their blindness, in not having their eyes open. 'To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness;' Eph. v. 8. 'Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.' What is the change and alteration made in the minds of men intended in this expression will afterward appear. But that a great change is proposed none can doubt; Col. i. 13. 'who hath delivered us from the power of darkness;' as also, 1 Pet. ii. 9. 'who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.' And the darkness which is in these testimonies ascribed unto persons in an unregenerate condition, is by Paul compared to that which was at the beginning, before the creation of light; Gen. i. 2. 'Darkness was upon the face of the deep.' There was no creature that had a visive faculty, there was darkness subjectively in all, and there was no light to see by, but all was objectively wrapped up in darkness. In this state of things, God by an almighty act of his power created light; ver. 3. 'God said, Let there be light, and there was light.' And no otherwise is it in this new creation. 'God, who commanded then light to shine out of darkness, shines into the hearts of men to give them the knowledge of his glory, in the face of Jesus Christ;' 2 Cor. iv. 6. Spiritual darkness is in and upon all men, until God, by an almighty and effectual work of the Spirit, shine into them, or create light in them. And this

darkness is that light within which some boast to be in themselves and others.

To clear our way in this matter, we must consider, first, the nature of this spiritual *darkness*, what it is, and wherein it doth consist; and then, secondly, shew its *efficacy* and *power* in and on the minds of men, and how they are corrupted by it.

First, The term of darkness in this case is *metaphorical*, and borrowed from that which is *natural*. What natural darkness is, and wherein it consists, all men know; if they know it not in its cause and reason, yet they know it by its effects. They know it is that which hinders men from all regular operations, which are to be guided by the outward senses. And it is twofold; 1. When men have not light to see by; or, when the usual light, the only *external medium* for the discovery of distant objects, is taken from them. So was it with the Egyptians, during the 'three days' darkness' that was on their land. They could not see for want of light; they had their visive faculty continued unto them; yet, having 'no light,' they 'saw not one another, nor arose any from his place;' Exod. x. 23. For God, probably to augment the terror of his judgment, restrained the virtue of artificial light, as well as he did that which was natural. 2. There is darkness unto men when they are *blind*, either born so, or made so. Psal. lxxix. 29. 'Let their eyes be darkened that they may not see.' So the angel smote the Sodomites with blindness; Gen. xix. 11. and Paul the sorcerer; Acts xiii. 11. However the sun shineth, it is all one perpetual night unto them that are blind.

Answerable hereunto, *spiritual darkness* may be referred unto two heads. For there is an *objective darkness*, a darkness that is *on* men; and a *subjective darkness*, a darkness that is *in* them. The first consists, in the want of those means whereby alone they may be enlightened in the knowledge of God and spiritual things. This is intended, Matt. iv. 16. This means is the word of God, and the preaching of it. Hence it is called 'a light;' Psal. cxix. 105. and is sad to 'give light;' Psal. xix. 8. or to be 'a light shining in a dark place;' 2 Pet. i. 19. And it is so termed, because it is the outward means of communicating the light of the knowledge of God unto the minds of men. What the sun is unto the world, as unto things natural, that is the word and the

preaching of it unto men as to things spiritual. And hence our apostle applies what is said of the sun in the firmament, as to the enlightening of the world, Psal. xix. 1—4. unto the gospel, and the preaching of it, Rom. x. 15. 18.

And this darkness is upon many in the world, even all unto whom the gospel is not declared, or by whom it is not received, where it is or hath been so. Some I know have entertained a vain imagination about a saving revelation of the knowledge of God, by the works of creation and providence, objected to the rational faculties of the minds of men. It is not my purpose here to divert unto the confutation of that fancy. Were it so, it were easy to demonstrate, that there is no saving revelation of the knowledge of God unto sinners, but as he is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself; and that so he is not made known, but by the word of reconciliation committed unto the dispensers of the gospel. Whatever knowledge therefore of God may be attained by the means mentioned, as he is the God of nature ruling over men, and requiring obedience from them according to the covenant and law of their creation; yet the knowledge of him as a God in Christ pardoning sin and saving sinners, is attainable by the gospel only. But this I have proved and confirmed elsewhere.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to remove and take away this darkness, which until it is done, no man can see the kingdom of God, or enter into it. And this he doth by sending the word of the gospel into any nation, country, place, or city, as he pleaseth. The gospel does not get ground in any place, nor is restrained from any place or people, by accident, or by the endeavours of men; but it is sent and disposed of according to the sovereign will and pleasure of the Spirit of God. He giveth, calls, and sends men unto the work of preaching it; Acts xiii. 2. 4. and disposeth them unto the places where they shall declare it, either by express revelation, as of old; Acts xvi. 6—10. or guides them by the secret operations of his providence. Thus the dispensation of the 'light of the gospel,' as to times, places, and persons, depends on his sovereign pleasure; Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20. Wherefore, although we are to take care and pray much about the continuance of the dispensation of the gospel in any place, and its propagation in others;

yet need we not to be over-solicitous about it. This work and care the Holy Ghost hath taken on himself, and will carry it on according to the counsel of God and his purposes, concerning the kingdom of Jesus Christ in this world. And thus far the dispensation of the gospel, is only a *causa sine qua non* of the regeneration of men, and the granting of it depends solely on the will of the Spirit of God.

It is *subjective darkness* which is of more direct and immediate consideration in this matter, the nature whereof with what it doth respect, and the influence of it on the minds of men must be declared, before we can rightly apprehend the work of the Holy Spirit, in its removal by regeneration.

This is that whereby the Scripture expresseth the *natural depravation* and corruption of the minds of men, with respect unto *spiritual things*, and the duty that we owe to God according to the tenor of the covenant. And two things must be premised to our consideration of it; as,

1. That I shall not treat of the depravation or corruption of the mind of man by the fall, with respect unto *things natural, civil, political, or moral*, but merely with regard to *things spiritual*, heavenly, and evangelical. It were easy to evince, not only by testimonies of the Scripture, but by the experience of all mankind built on reason, and the observation of instances innumerable, that the whole rational soul of man since the fall, and by the entrance of sin, is weakened, impaired, vitiated, in all its faculties, and all their operations about their proper and natural objects. Neither is there any relief against these evils, with all those unavoidable perturbations wherewith it is possessed, and actually disordered in all its workings, but by some secret and hidden operation of the Spirit of God, such as he continually exerts in the rule and government of the world. But it is concerning the impotency, defect, depravation, and perversity of the mind, with respect unto *spiritual things* alone, that we shall treat at present. I say, then;

2. That by reason of that *vice, corruption, or depravation*, of the minds of all unregenerate men, which the Scripture calls *darkness* and *blindness*, they are not able of themselves, by their own reasons and understandings, however exercised and improved, to discern, receive, understand, or believe

savingly spiritual things, or the mystery of the gospel, when and as they are outwardly revealed unto them, without an effectual powerful work of the Holy Spirit creating, or by his almighty power inducing, a new *saving light* into them^c. Let it be supposed that the mind of a man be no way hurt or impaired by any natural defect, such as doth not attend the whole race of mankind, but is personal only and accidental; suppose it free from contracted habits of vice, or voluntary prejudices: yet upon the proposal of the doctrine and mysteries of the gospel, let it be done by the most skillful masters of the assemblies, with the greatest evidence and demonstration of the truth; it is not able of itself, spiritually and savingly, to receive, understand, and assent unto them, without the especial^d aid, and assistance, and operation, of the Holy Spirit. To evince this truth, we may consider, in one instance, the description given us in the Scripture of the mind itself, and its operations, with respect unto spiritual things. This we have, Eph. iv. 17, 18. ‘This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.’ It is of the Gentiles that the apostle speaks, but the apostle speaks of them, on the account of that which is common unto all men by nature. For he treats of their condition, with respect unto the faculties of their minds and souls, wherein there is, as unto the life of God or spiritual things, no difference naturally among men; and their operations and effects are for the substance of them the same.

^c Quomodo lux incassum circumfudit oculos cæcos vel clausus, ita animalis homo non percipit ea quæ sunt Dei. Bernard. Ser. 1. sup. Cantic.

^d Si quis per naturæ vigorem bonum aliquod quod ad salutem pertinet vitæ æternæ cogitare ut expedit aut eligere, sive salutari, id est, Evangelicæ prædicationi consentire posse confirmat, absque illuminatione et inspiratione Spiritus Sancti, qui dat omnibus suavitatem consentiendo et credendo veritati, hæretico fallitur Spiritu. Conc. Arausican. can. 2. can. 7.

Ideo dictum est quia nullus hominum illuminatur nisi illo lumine veritatis quod Deus est; ne quisquam putaret ab eo se illuminari, a quo aliquid audit ut discat, non dico si quenquam magnum hominem, sed nec si angelum ei contingat habere doctorem. Adhibetur enim sermo veritatis extrinsecus vocis ministerio corporali; verumtamen neque qui plantat est aliquid, neque qui rigat, sed qui incrementum dat Deus. Audit quippe homo dicentem vel hominem vel angelum, sed ut sentiat et cognoscat verum esse quod dicitur, illo lumine mens ejus intus aspergitur, quod æternum manet, quod etiam in tenebris lucet. August. de Peccator. Meritis et Remissione. lib. 1. c. 25.

Some, indeed, give such an account of this text, as if the apostle had said, ‘ Do we not live after the Heathens, in the vileness of those practices, and in their idol-worship? That long course of sin having blinded their understandings, so that they see not that which by the light of nature they are enabled to see, and by that gross ignorance and obduration of heart, run into all impiety, are far removed from that life which God and nature require of them.’ It is supposed in this exposition, (1.) That the apostle hath respect, in the first place, to the practices of the Gentiles, not to their state and condition. (2.) That this practice concerns only their idolatry and idol-worship. (3.) That what is here ascribed unto them, came upon them by a long course of sinning. (4.) That the darkness mentioned, consists in a not discerning of what might be seen by the light of nature. (5.) That their alienation from the life of God, consisted in running into that impiety which was distant or removed from the life that God and nature require. But all these sentiments are so far from being contained in the text, as that they are expressly contrary unto it. For, (1.) although the apostle doth carry on his description of this state of the Gentiles, unto the vile practices that ensued thereon; ver. 19. yet it is their state by nature, with respect unto the life of God, which is first intended by him. This is apparent from what he prescribes unto Christians in opposition thereunto; namely, ‘ The new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness;’ ver. 24. (2.) The vanity mentioned is subjective in their minds, and so hath no respect to idol-worship, but as it was an effect thereof. The vanity of their minds is the principle whereof this walking, be what it will, was the effect and consequent. (3.) Here is no mention nor intimation of any long course of sinning, much less that it should be the cause of the other things ascribed to the Gentiles, whereof indeed it was the effect. The description given, is that of the state of all men by nature, as is plain from chap. ii. 1—3. (4.) The darkness here mentioned, is opposed unto being ‘ light in the Lord;’ chap. v. 8. which is not mere natural light, nor can any by that light alone discern spiritual things, or the things that belong to the life of God. (5.) The life of God here, is not that life which God and nature require, but that

life which God reveals in, requires, and communicates by, the gospel through Jesus Christ, as all learned expositors acknowledge. Wherefore, the apostle treateth here of the state of men by nature, with respect unto spiritual and supernatural things. And three heads he reduceth all things in man unto. 1. He mentions τὸν νοῦν, the ‘mind.’ 2. Τὴν διάνοιαν, the ‘understanding.’ And, 3. Τὸν καρδίαν, the ‘heart.’ And all these are one entire principle of all our moral and spiritual operations; and are all affected with the darkness and ignorance whereof we treat.

1. There is ὁ νοῦς, the ‘mind.’ This is the τὸ ἡγεμονικόν, the *leading and ruling faculty* of the soul. It is that in us which looketh out after proper objects, for the will and affections to receive and embrace. Hereby we have our first apprehensions of all things, whence deductions are made to our practice. And hereunto is ascribed ματαιότης, ‘vanity;’ they walk in the vanity of their mind. Things in the Scripture are said to be vain, which are useless and fruitless. Μάταιος, ‘vain,’ is from μάτην, ‘to no purpose;’ Matt. xv. 9. Hence the apostle calls the idols of the Gentiles, and the rites used in their worship, ματαία, ‘vain things;’ Acts xiv. 15. So he expresseth the Hebrew, הַבְּלִי שָׁוָא; Jonah ii. 8. ‘lying vanities;’ or און, which is as much as ἀνωφελές, a thing altogether useless and unprofitable, according to the description given of them, 1 Sam. xii. 21. הַתְּהוּ אֲשֶׁר לֹא יַעֲיִלוּ וְלֹא יִצְלוּ, ‘Vain things which cannot profit, nor deliver, for they are vain.’ There is no profit in, nor use of, that which is vain. As the mind is said to be vain, or under the power of vanity, two things are intended. (1.) Its natural inclination unto things that are vain; that is, such as are not a proper nor useful object unto the soul and its affections. It seeks about to lead the soul to rest and satisfaction, but always unto vain things, and that in great variety. Sin, the world, pleasures, the satisfaction of the flesh, with pride of life, are the things which it naturally pursues. And in actings of this nature a vain mind abounds; it multiplies vain imaginations, like the sand on the sea-shore. These are called the figments of the hearts of men; Gen. vi. 5. which are found to be only evil continually. These it feigns and frames, abundantly bringing them forth as the earth doth grass, or as a cloud pours out drops of water. And herein,

(2.) it is unstable. For that which is vain is various, inconstant, unfixed, light, as a natural mind is; so that it is like hell itself for confusion and disorder; or the whorish woman described by Solomon; Prov. vii. 11, 12. And this hath befallen it by the loss of that fixed regularity which it was created in. There was the same cogitative or imaginative faculty in us in the state of innocency, as there remains under the power of sin. But then all the actings of it were orderly and regular. The mind was able to direct them all unto the end for which we were made. God was, and would have been, the principal object of them, and all other things in order unto him. But now being turned off from him, the mind in them engageth in all manner of confusion; and they all end in vanity or disappointment. They offer, as it were, their service unto the soul, to bring it in satisfaction. And although they are rejected one after another, as not answering what they pretend unto, yet they constantly arise under the same notion, and keep the whole soul under everlasting disappointments. And from hence it is that the mind cannot assent unto the common principles of religion in a due manner, which yet it cannot deny. This will be farther cleared afterward. Hereon, in conversion unto God, we are said to have 'our minds renewed;' Rom. xii. 2. and to be 'renewed in the spirit of our minds;' Eph. iv. 23. By the mind the faculty itself is intended, the rational principle in us of apprehension, of thinking, discoursing, and assenting. This is renewed by grace, or brought into another habitude and frame, by the implantation of a ruling, guiding, spiritual light in it. The spirit of the mind is the inclination and disposition in the actings of it. These also must be regulated by grace.

2. There is the *δύναμις*, the 'understanding.' This is the *τὸ διακριτικὸν*, the *directive, discerning, judging faculty* of the soul, that leads it unto practice. It guides the soul in the choice of the notions which it receives by the mind. And this is more corrupt than the mind itself. For the nearer things come to practice, the more prevalent in them is the power of sin. This, therefore, is said to be darkened. And being so, it is wholly in vain to pretend a sufficiency in it to discern spiritual things, without a supernatural illumination. Light in the dispensation of the gospel shines,

or casts out some rays of itself, into this darkened understanding of men, but that receives it not; John i. 5.

3. There is καρδία, the 'heart.' This in Scripture is τὸ πρακτικόν, in the *soul* the *practical principle* of operation, and so includes the *will* also. It is the actual compliance of the will and affections with the mind and understanding, with respect unto the objects proposed by them. Light is received by the mind, applied by the understanding, used by the heart. Upon this, saith the apostle, there is πώρωσις, 'blindness.' It is not a mere ignorance, or incomprehensiveness of the notions of truth that is intended, but a stubborn resistance of light and conviction. An obstinate and obdurate hardness is upon the heart, whence it rejects all the impressions that come upon it from notions of truth. And on these considerations men themselves before conversion are said to be 'darkness;' Eph. v. 8. There may be degrees in a moral privation; but when it is expressed in the abstract, it is a sign that it is at its height, that it is total and absolute; and this is spoken with respect unto spiritual and saving light only, or a saving apprehension of spiritual truths. There is not in such persons so much as any disposition remaining to receive saving knowledge, any more than there is a disposition in darkness itself to receive light. The mind indeed remains a capable subject to receive it, but hath no active power nor disposition in itself towards it. And therefore when God is pleased to give us a new ability to understand and perceive spiritual things in a due manner, he is said to give us a new faculty, because of the utter disability of our minds naturally to receive them; 1 John v. 20. Let vain men boast whilst they please of the perfection and ability of their rational faculties, with respect unto religion, and the things of God; this is the state of them by nature, upon his judgment that must stand for ever.

And, by the way, it may not be amiss to divert here a little unto the consideration of that exposition which the whole world, and all things in it, give unto this text and testimony, concerning the minds of natural men being under the power of vanity, for this is the spring and inexhaustible fountain of all that vanity which the world is filled with. There is indeed a vanity which is penal, namely, that vexation and disappointment which men finally meet withal in the pursuit of

perishing things, whereof the wise man treats at large in his Ecclesiastes. But I intend that sinful vanity which the mind itself produces, and that in all sorts of persons, ages, sexes, and conditions in the world. This some of the heathens saw, complained of, reprov'd, and derided, but yet could never reach to the cause of it, nor free themselves from being under the power of the same vanity, though in a way peculiar and distinct from the common sort, as might easily be demonstrated. But the thing is apparent, almost all that our eyes see, or our ears hear of, in the world, is altogether vain. All that which makes such a noise, such a business, such an appearance and show among men, may be reduced unto two heads. (1.) The vanity that they bring into the things that are, and that are either good in themselves, and of some use, or at least indifferent. So men do variously corrupt their buildings and habitations, their trading, their conversation, their power, their wealth, their relations; they join innumerable vanities with them, which render them loathsome and contemptible, and the meanest condition to be the most suitable to rational satisfaction. (2.) Men find out, and, as it were, create things to be mere supporters, countenancers, and nourishers of vanity. Such in religion, are carnal pompous ceremonies, like those of the church of Rome, which have no end, but to bring in some kind of provision for the satisfaction of vain minds; stage-players, mimics, with innumerable other things of the same nature, which are nothing but theatres for vanity to act itself upon. It were endless but to mention the common effects of vanity in the world; and men are mightily divided about these things. Those engaged in them, think it strange that others run not out into the 'same compass of excess and riot with themselves, speaking evil of them;' 1 Pet. iv. 4. They wonder at the perverse, stubborn, and froward humour, which befalls some men, that they delight not in, that they approve not of, those things and ways wherein they find so great a suitableness unto their own minds. Others again are ready to admire whence it is that the world is mad on such vain and foolish things as it is almost wholly given up unto. The consideration we have insisted on, gives us a satisfactory account of the grounds and reasons hereof. The mind of man by nature is wholly vain, under the power of vanity, and is an endless fruitful

womb of all monstrous births. The world is now growing towards six thousand years old, and yet is no nearer the bottom of the springs of its vanity, or the drawing out of its supplies, than it was the first day that sin entered into it. New sins, new vices, new vanities, break forth continually; and all is from hence, that the mind of man by nature is altogether vain. Nor is there any way or means for putting a stop hereunto in persons, families, cities, nations, but so far as the minds of men are cured and renewed by the Holy Ghost. The world may alter its shape, and the outward appearances of things, it may change its scenes, and act its part in new habits and dresses, but it will still be altogether vain, so long as natural uncured vanity is predominant in the minds of men, and this will sufficiently secure them from attaining any saving acquaintance with spiritual things.

Again, it is one of the principal duties incumbent on us to be acquainted with, and diligently to watch over, the remainders of this vanity in our own minds. The sinful distempers of our natures are not presently cured at once, but the healing and removing of them is carried on by degrees unto the consummation of the course of our obedience in this world. And there are three effects of this natural vanity of the mind in its depraved condition to be found among believers themselves. (1.) An instability in holy duties, as meditation, prayer, and hearing of the word; how ready is the mind to wander in them, and to give entertainment unto vain and fond imaginations, at least unto thoughts and apprehensions of things unsuited to the duties wherein we are engaged. How difficult is it to keep it up unto an even fixed stable frame of acting spiritually in spiritual things? How is it ready at every breath to unbend and let down its intension? All we experience or complain of in this kind, is from the uncured relics of this vanity. (2.) This is that which inclines and leads men towards a conformity with and unto a vain world, in its customs, habits, and ordinary converse, which are all vain and foolish. And so prevalent is it herein, and such arguments hath it possessed itself withal to give it countenance, that in many instances of vanity it is hard to give a distinction between them and the whole world that lies under the power of it. Professors, it may be, will not comply with the world in the things before mentioned, that have no other use nor end, but merely to support, act, and nourish

vanity; but from other things, which being indifferent in themselves, are yet filled with vanity in their use; how ready are many for a compliance with the course of the world, which lieth in evil and passeth away. (3.) It acts itself in fond and foolish imaginations, whereby it secretly makes provision for the flesh and the lusts thereof, for they all generally lead unto self-exaltation and satisfaction. And these, if not carefully checked, will proceed to such an excess as greatly to taint the whole soul. And in these things lies the principal cause and occasion of all other sins and miscarriages. We have therefore no more important duty incumbent on us, than mightily to oppose this radical distemper. It is so also to attend diligently unto the remedy of it. And this consists, (1.) in a holy fixedness of mind, and an habitual inclination unto things spiritual, which is communicated unto us by the Holy Ghost, as shall be afterward declared; Eph. iv. 23, 24. (2.) In the due and constant improvement of that gracious principle. [1.] By constant watchfulness against the minds acting itself in vain, foolish, unprofitable imaginations, so far at least that vain thoughts may not lodge in us. [2.] By exercising it continually unto holy spiritual meditations, 'minding always the things that are above;' Col. iii. 3. [3.] By a constant conscientious humbling of our souls, for all the vain actings of our minds that we do observe; all which might be usefully enlarged on, but that we must return.

The minds of men unregenerate, being thus depraved and corrupted, being thus affected with darkness, and thereby being brought under the power of vanity, we may yet farther consider what other effects and consequents are on the same account ascribed unto it. And the mind of man in this state may be considered; either, 1. as to its dispositions and inclinations. 2. As to its power and actings, with respect unto spiritual supernatural things.

1. As to its dispositions, it is (from the darkness described) perverse and depraved, whereby men are alienated from the life of God; Eph. iv. 18. for this alienation of men from the divine life, is from the depravation of their minds. Hence are they said to be 'alienated and enemies in their minds by wicked works,' or by their minds in wicked works, being fixed on them, and under the power of them; Col. i. 21. And that we may the better understand what is in-

tended hereby, we may consider both what is this life of God, and how the unregenerate mind is alienated from it.

(1.) All life is from God. The life which we have in common with all other living creatures is from him; Acts xvii. 28. Psal. civ. 30. And, (2.) that peculiar vital life, which we have by the union of the rational soul with the body, is from God also, and that in an especial manner; Gen. ii. 7. Job x. 12. But neither of these are anywhere called the life of God. But it is an especial life unto God which is intended, and sundry things belong thereunto, or sundry things are applied unto the description of it. (1.) It is the life which God requireth of us, that we may please him here, and come to the enjoyment of him hereafter. The life of faith and spiritual obedience by Jesus Christ; Rom. i. 17. Gal. ii. 20. 'I live by the faith of the Son of God;' Rom. vi. 7. (2.) It is that life which God worketh in us, not naturally by his power, but spiritually by his grace; and that both as to the principle and all the vital acts of it; Eph. ii. 1. 5. Phil. ii. 13. (3.) It is that life whereby God liveth in us, that is, in and by his Spirit through Jesus Christ. Gal. ii. 20. 'Christ liveth in me;' and where the Son is there is the Father;' whence also this life is said to be 'hid with him in God;' Col. iii. 3. (4.) It is the life whereby we live to God, Rom. vi. 7. whereof God is the supreme and absolute end, as he is the principal efficient cause of it. And two things are contained herein; [1.] That we do all things to his glory. This is the proper end of all the acts and actings of this life; Rom. xiv. 7, 8. [2.] That we design in and by it, to come unto the eternal enjoyment of him, as our blessedness and reward; Gen. xv. 1. (5.) It is the life whereof the gospel is the law and rule; John vi. 68. Acts v. 20. (6.) A life, all whose fruits are holiness and spiritual evangelical obedience; Rom. vi. 22. Phil. i. 11. Lastly, It is a life that dieth not, that is not obnoxious unto death, eternal life; John xvii. 3. These things contain the chief concerns of that peculiar spiritual heavenly life, which is called the life of God.

(2.) The carnal mind is alienated from this life; it hath no liking of it, no inclination to it, but carrieth away the whole soul with an aversation from it. And this alienation or aversation appears in two things; [1.] In its unreadiness

and unaptness to receive instructions, in and about the concerns of it. Hence are men dull and slow of heart to believe; Luke xxiv. 25. *Νωθεροὶ ταῖς ἀκοαῖς*, Heb. v. 11, 12. ‘heavy in hearing,’ and slow in the apprehension of what they hear. So are all men towards what they do not like, but have an aversion from. This God complains of in the people of old; ‘My people are foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and have none understanding; they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge;’ Jer. iv. 22. [2.] In the choice and preferring of any other life before it. The first choice a natural mind makes, is of a life in sin and pleasure; which is but a death, a death to God, 1 Tim. v. 6. James v. 5. a life without the law, and before it comes; Rom. vii. 9. This is the life which is suited to the carnal mind, which it desires, delights in, and which willingly it would never depart from. Again, if by afflictions or convictions, it be in part or wholly forced to forsake and give up this life; it will choose, magnify, and extol, a moral life, a life in, by, and under, the law, though at the last it will stand it in no more stead than the life of sin and pleasure, which it hath been forced to forego; Rom. ix. 32. x. 3. The thoughts of this spiritual life, this life of God, it cannot away with; the notions of it are uncouth, the description of it is unintelligible, and the practice of it either odious folly or needless superstition. This is the disposition and inclination of the mind towards spiritual things, as it is corrupt and depraved.

2. The power also of the mind, with respect unto its actings towards spiritual things may be considered. And this, in short, is none at all, in the sense which shall be explained immediately, Rom. v. 6. for this is that which we shall prove concerning the mind of a natural man, or of a man in the state of nature; however it may be excited and improved, under those advantages of education and parts which it may have received; yet is not able, hath not a power of its own, spiritually and savingly, or in a due manner, to receive, embrace, and assent unto, spiritual things, when proposed unto it in the dispensation and preaching of the gospel, unless it be renewed, enlightened, and acted, by the Holy Ghost.

This the apostle plainly asserts, 1 Cor. ii. 14. ‘The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for

they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.'

First, The subject spoke of is, *Ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος*, 'animalis homo,' the 'natural man,' he who is a natural man. This epithet is in the Scripture opposed unto *πνευματικὸς*, 'spiritual,' 1 Cor. xv. 44. Jude 19. where *Ψυχικοὶ* are described by *πνεῦμα μὴ ἔχοντες*, such 'as have not the Spirit' of God. The foundation of this distinction, and the distribution of men into these two sorts thereby, is laid in that of our apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 45. *ἔγενετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν, ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν*. 'The first Adam was made a living soul.' Hence every man who hath no more but what is traduced from him, is called *ψυχικὸς*; he is a 'living soul,' as was the first Adam. And the 'last Adam is made a quickening spirit.' Hence he that is of him, partaker of his nature, that derives from him, is *πνευματικὸς*, a 'spiritual man.' The person therefore here spoken of, or *ψυχικὸς*, is one that hath all that is or can be derived from the first Adam, one endowed with a 'rational soul,' and who hath the use and exercise of all its rational faculties.

Some who look upon themselves almost so near to advancements, as to countenance them in magisterial dictates, and scornful reflections upon others, tell us, that by this natural man, 'a man given up to his pleasures, and guided by brutish affections,' and no other, is intended; 'one that gives himself up to the government of his inferior faculties.' But no rational man, no one that will attend unto the dictates of reason, is at all concerned in this assertion. But how is this proved? If we are not content with bare affirmations, we must at length be satisfied with railing and lying, and all sorts of reproaches. But the apostle in this chapter distributes all men living into *πνευματικοὶ* and *ψυχικοὶ*, 'spiritual' and 'natural.' He who is not a spiritual man, be he who and what he will, be he as rational as some either presume themselves to be, or would beg of the world to believe that they are, is a natural man. The supposition of a middle state of men is absolutely destructive of the whole discourse of the apostle as to its proper design. Besides, this of *ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος* is the best and softest term that is given in the Scripture to unregenerate men, with respect unto the things of God; and there is no reason why it should be thought

only to express the worst sort of them thereby. The Scripture terms not men peculiarly captivated unto brutish affections, *ἄνθρωποι ψυχκοὶ*, ‘natural men,’ but rather *ἄλογα ζῶα φυσικά*, 2 Pet. ii. 12. ‘natural brute beasts.’ And Austin gives us a better account of this exposition, Tractat. 98. in Johan. ‘Animalis homo, i. e. qui secundum hominem sapit, animalis dictus ab anima, carnalis a carne, quia ex anima et carne constat omnis homo, non percipit ea quæ sunt Spiritus Dei, i. e. quid gratia credentibus conferat crux Christi.’ And another; ‘Carnales dicimur, quando totos nos voluptatibus damus; spirituales, quando Spiritum Sanctum prævium sequimur; id est, cum ipso sapimus instruyente, ipso ducimur auctore. Animales reor esse philosophos qui proprios cogitatus putant esse sapientiam, de quibus recte dicitur, animalis autem homo non recipit ea quæ sunt Spiritus, stultitia quippe est ei.’ Hieronim. Comment. in Epist. ad Gal. cap. 5. And another, *Ψυχικὸς ἐστὶν ὁ τὸ πᾶν τοῖς λογισμοῖς τῆς ψυχῆς διδοὺς, καὶ μὴ νομίζων ἄνωθεν τινος δεῖσθαι βοηθείας, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἀνοίας; καὶ γὰρ ἔδωκεν αὐτὴν ὁ Θεὸς ἵνα μανθάνῃ, καὶ δὲ χηται τὸ πᾶρ αὐτοῦ; οὐκ ἵνα ἑαυτῇ αὐτὴν ἀρκεῖν νομίζῃ. Καὶ γὰρ οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ καλοὶ καὶ χρησιμοὶ; ἀλλ’ ἐὰν βούλονται χωρὶς φωτὸς ὁρᾶν, οὐδὲν αὐτοὺς τὸ κάλλος οἰνησεν, οὐδὲ ἡ οὐκεία, ἰσχύς, ἀλλὰ καὶ παραβλάπτει. Οὕτω τοίνυν ἡ ψυχὴ ἐὰν βουληθῇ χωρὶς πνεύματος βλέπειν, καὶ ἐμπόδον ἑαυτῇ γενεῇ. Chrysost. in 1 Cor. ii. 15.* ‘The natural man is he who ascribes all things to the power of the reasonings of the mind, and doth not think that he stands in need of aid from above, which is madness. For God hath given the soul that it should learn and receive what he bestows, or what is from him, and not suppose that it is sufficient of itself, or to itself. Eyes are beautiful and profitable; but if they would see without light, this beauty and power will not profit but hurt them. And the mind if it would see (spiritual things) without the Spirit of God, it doth but insnare itself.’ And it is a sottish supposition, that there are a sort of unregenerate rational men, who are not under the power of corrupt affections in and about spiritual things; seeing the ‘carnal mind is enmity against God.’ This, therefore, is the subject of the apostle’s proposition, namely, ‘a natural man,’ every one that is so, that is no more but so; that is, every one who is not ‘a spiritual man,’ is not one who hath received the Spirit of

Christ, ver. 11, 12. one that hath the spirit of a man enabling him to search and know the things of a man, or to attain wisdom in things natural, civil, or political.

Secondly, There is in the words a supposition of the proposal of some things unto the mind of this natural man. For the apostle speaks with respect unto the dispensation and preaching of the gospel, whereby that proposal is made; ver. 4. 7. and these things are τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ Θεοῦ; 'the things of the Spirit of God;' which are variously expressed in this chapter: ver. 7. they are called the 'wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom that God hath ordained;' ver. 12. the things 'that are freely given unto us of God;' ver. 16. the 'mind of Christ;' ver. 2. 'Jesus Christ and him crucified.' And sundry other ways to the same purpose. There are in the gospel, and belong to the preaching of it, precepts innumerable concerning moral duties to be observed towards God, ourselves, and other men. And all these have a coincidence with, and a suitableness unto the inbred light of nature, because the principles of them all are indelibly ingrafted therein. These things being in some sense the 'things of a man,' may be known by the 'spirit of a man that is in him;' ver. 11. Howbeit, they cannot be observed and practised according to the mind of God, without the aid and assistance of the Holy Ghost. But these are not the things peculiarly here intended, but the mysteries, which depend on more sovereign supernatural revelation, and that wholly. Things 'that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have they entered into the heart of man to conceive;' ver. 9. Things of God's sovereign counsel, whereof there were no impressions in the mind of man, in his first creation; see Eph. iii. 8—11.

Thirdly, That which is affirmed of the natural man, with respect unto these spiritual things, is doubly expressed. 1. By οὐ δέχεται, 'he receiveth them not.' 2. By οὐ δύναται γινῶναι, 'he cannot know them.' In this double assertion, (1). A power of receiving spiritual things is denied, he cannot know them. He cannot receive them. As Rom. vii. 8. 'The carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be;' and the reason hereof is subjoined; because they are spiritually discerned, a thing which such a person hath no power to effect. (2). A will of rejecting them is implied.

He receiveth them¹ not, for the reason hereof is, because they are foolishness unto him. They are represented unto him under such a notion, as that he will have nothing to do with them. (3.) Actually (and that both because he cannot, and because he will not), he receives them not. The natural man neither can, nor will, nor doth, receive the things of the Spirit of God; is altogether incapable of giving them admission in the sense to be explained.

To clear and free this assertion from objections, it must be observed,

First, That it is not the mere *literal sense of doctrines*, or propositions of truth that is intended^e. For instance, 'that Jesus Christ was crucified,' mentioned by the apostle, ver. 2. is a proposition, whose sense and importance any natural man may understand, and assent unto its truth, and so be said to receive it. And all the doctrines of the gospel may be taught and declared, in propositions and discourses, the sense and meaning whereof a natural man may understand. And in the due investigation of this sense, and judging thereon concerning truth and falsehood, lies that use of reason in religious things, which some would ignorantly confound with an ability of discerning spiritual things in themselves, and their own proper nature. This, therefore, is granted; but it is denied that a natural man can receive the things themselves. There is a wide difference between the mind's receiving doctrines notionally, and its receiving the things taught in them really. The first a natural man can do. It is done by all, who by the use of outward means do know the doctrine of the Scripture, in distinction from ignorance, falsehood, and error. Hence, men unregenerate are said 'to know the way of righteousness; 2 Pet. ii. 21. that is, notionally and doctrinally; for 'really,' saith our apostle, they 'cannot.' Hereon, they profess that they 'know God,' that is, the things which they are taught concerning him and his will, 'whilst in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient;' Tit. i. 16. Rom. ii. 17, 18. In the latter

^e Firmissime tene et nullatenus dubites, posse quidem hominem, quem nec ignorantia literarum, neque aliqua prohibet imbecillitas aut adversitas, verba sanctæ legis et evangelii legere sive ex ore cujusdum prædicatoris audire; sed ut quod audit percipiat etiam corde, ut mandata Dei facere velit, nemo potest nisi quem Deus gratia sua præveniret, datâ divinitus bonâ voluntate et virtute. August. de fide ad Petrum, cap. 32.

way they only receive spiritual things, in whose minds they are so implanted, as to produce their real and proper effects; Rom. xii. 2. Eph. iv. 22—24. And there are two things required unto the receiving of spiritual things really, and as they are in themselves.

1. That we discern, assent unto them, and *receive* them, under an apprehension of their conformity and agreeableness to the wisdom, holiness, and righteousness of God; 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. The reason why men receive not Christ crucified, as preached in the gospel, is because they see not a consonancy in it unto the divine perfections of the nature of God. Neither can any receive it, until they see in it an expression of divine power and wisdom. This, therefore, is required unto our receiving the things of the Spirit of God in a due manner; namely, that we spiritually see and discern their answerableness unto the wisdom, goodness, and holiness of God, wherein lies the principal rest and satisfaction of them that really believe. This a natural man cannot do.

2. That we discern their *suitableness* unto the great ends for which they are proposed as the means of accomplishing. Unless we see this clearly and distinctly, we cannot but judge them weakness and foolishness. These ends being the glory of God in Christ, with our deliverance from a state of sin and misery, with a translation into a state of grace and glory; unless we are acquainted with these things, and the aptness, and fitness, and power, of the things of the Spirit of God to effect them, we cannot receive them as we ought; and this a natural man cannot do. And from these considerations, unto which sundry others of the like nature might be added, it appears how, and whence it is, that a natural man is not capable of the things of the Spirit of God.

Secondly, It must be observed that there is, or may be, a *two-fold capacity* or *ability* of receiving, knowing, or understanding, spiritual things in the mind of a man.

1. There is a *natural power*, consisting in the suitableness and proportionableness of the *faculties* of the soul, to receive spiritual things in the way that they are proposed unto us. This is supposed in all the exhortations, promises, precepts, and threatenings, of the gospel. For in vain would they be proposed unto us, had we not rational minds and understandings to apprehend their sense, use, and importance;

and also meet subjects for the faith, grace, and obedience, which are required of us. None pretend that men are, in their conversion to God, like stocks and stones, or brute beasts that have no understanding. For, although the work of our conversion is called, a ‘turning of stones into children of Abraham;’ because of the greatness of the change, and because of ourselves we contribute nothing thereunto: yet if we were every way as such, as to the capacity of our natures, it would not become the wisdom of God to apply the means mentioned for effecting of that work. God is said, indeed, herein to give us ‘an understanding;’ 1 John v. 20. but the natural faculty of the understanding is not thereby intended, but only the renovation of it by grace, and the actual exercise of that grace in apprehending spiritual things. There are two adjuncts of the commands of God: (1.) That they are equal. (2.) That they are easy, or not grievous. The former they have from the nature of the things commanded, and the fitness of our minds to receive such commands; Ezek. xxviii. 25. The latter they have from the dispensation of the Spirit and grace of Christ, which renders them not only possible unto us, but easy for us.

Some pretend, that whatever is required of us, or prescribed unto us in a way of duty, that we have a power in and of ourselves to perform^f. If by this power, they intend no more, but that our minds, and the other rational faculties of our souls, are fit and meet, as to their natural capacity, for and unto such acts, as wherein those duties do consist, it is freely granted. For God requires nothing of us, but what must be acted in our minds and wills, and which they are naturally meet and suited for. But if they intend such an active power and ability, as being excited by the motives proposed unto us, can of itself answer the commands of God in a due manner; they deny the corruption of our nature by the entrance of sin, and render the grace of Christ useless, as shall be demonstrated.

^f Magnum aliquid Pelagiani se scire putant quando dicunt, non juberet Deus quod sit non posse ab homine fieri, quis hoc nesciat? sed ideo jubet aliqua quæ non possumus ut noverimus quid ab illo petere debeamus. Ipsa enim est quæ orando impetrat, quod lex imperat. August. de Grat. et lib. Arbit. cap. 19.

Mandando impossibilia non prævaricatores Deus homines fecit sed humiles, ut omne os obturetur et reus fiat totus mundus Deo; accipientes igitur mandatum, et sentientes defectum clamabimus ad cælum et miserabitur nostri Deus. Bernard. Serm. 50. in Cantico.

2. There is, or may be, a *power* in the mind to discern spiritual things, whereby it is so able to do it, as that it can immediately *exercise* that power in the spiritual discerning of them upon their due proposal unto it, that is, spiritually; as a man that hath a visive faculty sound and entire, upon the due proposal of visible objects unto him, can discern and see them. This power must be spiritual and supernatural. For whereas, to receive spiritual things, spiritually, is so to receive them as really to believe them with faith divine and supernatural, to love them with divine love, to conform the whole soul and affection unto them; Rom. vi. 17. 2 Cor. iii. 18. no natural man hath power so to do; this is that which is denied in this place by the apostle: wherefore, between the natural capacity of the mind, and the act of spiritual discerning, there must be an interposition of an effectual work of the Holy Ghost enabling it thereunto; 1 John v. 20. 1 Cor. iv. 6.

Of the assertion, thus laid down and explained, the apostle gives a double reason; the first taken from the *nature* of the things to be known, with respect unto the mind and understanding of a natural man; the other from the *way* or manner whereby alone spiritual things may be acceptably discerned.

1. The first reason, taken from the nature of the things themselves with respect unto the mind, is, *that* 'they are foolishness.' In themselves they are the 'wisdom of God;' 2 Cor. ii. 7. Effects of the wisdom of God, and those which have the impress of the wisdom of God upon them; and when the dispensation of them was said to be foolishness, the apostle contends not about it, but tells them, however, it is the 'foolishness of God;' 1 Cor. i. 15. which he doth to cast contempt on all the wisdom of men, whereby the gospel is despised: and they are the 'hidden wisdom' of God; such an effect of divine wisdom as no creature could make any discovery of; Eph. iii. 9, 10. Job xxviii. 20—22. And they are the 'wisdom of God in a mystery,' or full of deep mysterious wisdom. But to the natural man they are foolishness, not only although they are the wisdom of God, but peculiarly because they are so, and as they are so; for the carnal mind is enmity against God. Now that is esteemed foolishness, which is looked on either as weak and impertinent, or as that which contains or expresseth means and

ends disproportionate, or as that which is undesirable in comparison of what may be set up in competition with it, or is on any other consideration not eligible, or to be complied with on the terms whereon it is proposed. And for one or other, or all of these reasons, are spiritual things, namely, those here intended, wherein the wisdom of God in the mystery of the gospel doth consist, foolishness unto a natural man; which we shall demonstrate by some instances.

(1.) That they were so unto the learned philosophers of old, both our apostle doth testify, and the known experience of those first ages of the church makes evident; 1 Cor. i. 22, 23. 26—28. Had spiritual things been suited unto the minds or reasons of natural men, it could not be but that those who had most improved their minds, and were raised unto the highest exercise of their reasons, must much more readily have received and embraced the mysteries of the gospel, than those who were poor, illiterate, and came many degrees behind them in the exercise and improvement thereof. So we see it is as to the reception of any thing in nature or morality, which, being of any worth, is proposed unto the minds of men; they are embraced soonest by them that are wisest and know most. But here things fell out quite otherwise; they were the wise, the knowing, the rational, the learned men of the world, that made the greatest and longest opposition unto spiritual things; and that expressly and avowedly, because they were foolishness unto them, and that on all the accounts before-mentioned; and their opposition unto them they managed with pride, scorn, and contempt, as they thought foolish things ought to be handled.

The profound ignorance and confidence whence it is that some of late are not ashamed to preach and print, that it was the learned, rational, wise part of mankind, as they were esteemed or professed of themselves; the philosophers, and such as under their conduct pretended unto a life according to the dictates of reason, who first embraced the gospel, as being more disposed unto its reception than others, cannot be sufficiently admired or despised. Had they once considered what is spoken unto this purpose in the New Testament, or knew any thing of the entrances, growth, or progress of Christian religion in the world, they would themselves be ashamed of this folly. But every day in this

matter, 'prodeunt oratores novi, stulti adolescentuli,' who talk confidently, whilst they know neither what they say, nor whereof they do affirm.

2. The principal mysteries of the gospel, or the spiritual things intended, are by many looked on and rejected as *foolish*, because *false* and *untrue*. Though indeed they have no reason to think them false, but because they suppose them foolish; and they fix upon charging them with falsity, to countenance themselves in judging them to be folly. Whatever concerns the incarnation of the Son of God; the satisfaction that he made for sin and sinners; the imputation of his righteousness unto them that believe; the effectual working of his grace in the conversion of the souls of men, which, with what belongs unto them, comprise the greatest part of the spiritual things of the gospel, are not received by many, because they are false as they judge. And that which induceth them so to determine, is because they look on them as foolish and unsuited unto the rational principles of their minds.

3. Many plainly *scoff* at them, and despise them as the most *contemptible notions* that mankind can exercise their reasons about. Such were of old prophesied concerning; 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4. and things at this day are come to that pass. The world swarms with scoffers at spiritual things, as those which are unfit for rational, noble, generous spirits to come under a sense or power of, because they are so foolish. But these things were we foretold of, that when they came to pass we should not be troubled or shaken in our minds. Yea, the atheism of some, is made a means to confirm the faith of others.

It is not much otherwise with some, who yet dare not engage into an open opposition to the gospel with them before mentioned. For they profess the faith of it, and avow a subjection to the rules and laws of it. But the things declared in the gospel may be reduced unto two heads, as was before observed: (1.) Such as consist in the confirmation, direction, and improvement of the moral principles and precepts of the law of nature. (2.) Such as flow immediately from the sovereign will and wisdom of God, being no way communicated unto us, but by supernatural revelation only. Such are all the effects of the wisdom and

grace of God, as he was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself; the offices of Christ, his administration of them, and dispensation of the Spirit, with the especial, evangelical, supernatural graces and duties which are required in us with respect thereunto. The first sort of these things many will greatly praise and highly extol. And they will declare how consonant they are to reason, and what expressions suitable unto them may be found in the ancient philosophers. But it is evident that herein also they fall under a double inconvenience; for, [1.] mostly, they visibly transgress what they boast of as their rule, and that above others. For where shall we meet with any, at least with many, of these sort of men, who, in any measure, comply with that modesty, humility, meekness, patience, self-denial, abstinence, temperance, contempt of the world, love of mankind, charity and purity, which the gospel requires under this head of duties? Pride, ambition, insatiable desires after earthly advantages and promotions, scoffing, scorn and contempt of others, vanity of converse, envy, wrath, revenge, railing, are none of the moral duties required in the gospel. And, [2.] no pretence of an esteem for any one part of the gospel, will shelter men from the punishment due to the rejection of the whole, by whom any essential part of it is refused. And this is the condition of many. The things which most properly belong to the mysteries of the gospel, or the unsearchable riches of the grace of God in Christ Jesus, are foolishness unto them; and the preaching of them is called canting and folly. And some of these, although they go not so far as the friar at Rome, who said, that 'St. Paul fell into great excesses in these things;' yet they have dared to accuse his writings of darkness and obscurity, for no other reason, so far as I can understand, but because he insists on the declaration of these spiritual mysteries. And it is not easy to express what contempt and reproach is cast by some preachers on them. But it is not amiss that some have proclaimed their own shame herein, and have left it on record to the abhorrency of posterity.

5. The event of the dispensation of the gospel manifesteth, that the spiritual things of it are foolishness to the most, for as such are they rejected by them: Isa. liii. 1—3. Suppose a man of good reputation for wisdom and sobriety,

should go unto others, and inform them, and that with earnestness, evidence of love to them, and care for them, with all kind of motives to beget a belief of what he proposeth, that by such ways as he prescribeth, they may exceedingly increase their substance in this world, until they exceed the wealth of kings, a thing that the minds of men in their contrivance and designs are intent upon; if in this case they follow not his advice, it can be for no other reason, but because they judge the things proposed by him, to be no way suited or expedient unto the end promised; that is, to be foolish things: and this is the state of things with respect unto the mysteries of the gospel. Men are informed in and by the ways of God's appointment, how great and glorious they are, and what blessed consequents there will be of a spiritual reception of them. The beauty and excellency of Christ, the inestimable privilege of divine adoption; the great and precious promises made unto them that do believe; the glory of the world to come; the necessity and excellency of holiness and gospel-obedience unto the attaining of everlasting blessedness, are preached unto men, and pressed on them with arguments and motives filled with divine authority and wisdom: yet, after all this we see, how few eventually do apply themselves with any industry to receive them, or at least actually do receive them; 'for many are called, but few are chosen.' And the reason is, because, indeed, unto their darkened minds, these things are foolishness, whatsoever they pretend unto the contrary.

Secondly, As the instance foregoing compriseth the reasons why a natural man *will* never receive the things of the Spirit of God, so the apostle adds a reason why *he cannot*; and that is taken from the manner whereby alone they may be usefully and savingly received, which they cannot attain unto; '*because they are spiritually discerned.*' In this whole chapter he insists on an opposition between a natural and a spiritual man, natural things and spiritual things, natural light and knowledge, and spiritual. The natural man, he informs us, will, by a natural light, discern natural things. 'The things of a man knoweth the spirit of a man.' And the spiritual man, by a spiritual light received from Jesus Christ, discerneth spiritual things. For 'none knoweth the things

of God, but the Spirit of God, and he to whom he will reveal them.' This ability the apostle denies unto a natural man. And this he proves, 1. Because it is the work of the Spirit of God, to endow the minds of men with that ability, which there were no need of, in case men had it of themselves by nature. And, 2. (as he shews plentifully elsewhere) the light itself, whereby alone spiritual things can be spiritually discerned, is wrought, effected, created in us, by an almighty act of the power of God ; 2 Cor. iv. 6.

From these things premised it is evident, that there is a two-fold impotency on the minds of men with respect unto spiritual things: 1. That which immediately affects the mind, a *natural impotency* whence it *cannot* receive them, for want of light in itself; 2. That which affects the mind by the will and affections, a *moral impotency*, whereby it cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God, because unalterably it *will not*; and that because from the unsuitableness of the object unto its will and affections, and the mind by them, they are foolishness unto it.

1. There is in unregenerate men a *natural impotency*, through the immediate depravation of the faculties of the mind, or understanding, whereby a natural man is absolutely *unable*, without an especial renovation by the Holy Ghost, to discern spiritual things in a saving manner^g. Neither is this impotency, although absolutely and naturally insuperable, and although it have in it also the nature of a punishment, any excuse or alleviation of the sin of men when they receive not spiritual things, as proposed unto them; for although it be our misery, it is our sin; it is the misery of our persons, and the sin of our natures. As by it there is an unconformity in our minds to the mind of God, it is our sin; as it is a consequent of the corruption of our nature by the fall, it is an effect of sin; and as it exposeth us unto all the ensuing evil of sin and unbelief, it is both the punishment and cause of sin. And no man can plead his sin or fault,

^g In nullo gloriandum, quia nihil nostrum est. Cyprian. lib. 3. ad Quirin.

Fide perditâ, spe relicta, intelligentia obsecata, voluntate captiva, homo qua in se reparatur non invenit. lib. 1. de Vocat. Gent. cap. 3.

Quicumque tribuit sibi bonum quod facit, etiamsi nihil videtur mali manibus operari, jam cordis innocentiam perdidit, in quo se largitori bonorum prætulit. Hieron. in Prov. cap. 16.

as an excuse of another sin in any kind. This impotency is natural; because it consists in the deprivation of the light and power that was originally in the faculties of our minds or understandings, and because it can never be taken away or cured but by an immediate communication of a new spiritual power and ability unto the mind itself by the Holy Ghost in its renovation, so curing the depravation of the faculty itself. And this is consistent with what was before declared, the natural power of the mind to receive spiritual things: for that power respects the natural capacity of the faculties of our minds; this impotency the depravation of them with respect unto spiritual things.

2. There is in the minds of unregenerate persons a *moral impotency*, which is reflected on them greatly from the will and affections, whence the mind never *will receive* spiritual things; that is, it will always and unchangeably reject and refuse them, and that because of various lusts, corruptions, and prejudices, invincibly fixed in them, causing them to look on them as foolishness. Hence it will come to pass, that no man shall be judged and perish at the last day merely on the account of his natural impotency. Every one to whom the gospel hath been preached, and by whom it is refused, shall be convinced of positive actings in their minds, rejecting the gospel for the love of self, sin, and the world. Thus our Saviour tells the Jews, that 'no man can come unto him, unless the Father draw him;' John vi. 44. Such is their natural impotency that they cannot, nor is it to be cured but by an immediate divine instruction or illumination, as it is written, 'they shall be all taught of God;' ver. 45. But this is not all, he tells them elsewhere, 'you will not come unto me that you may have life;' John v. 40. The present thing in question was not the power or impotency of their minds, but the obstinacy of their wills and affections which men shall principally be judged upon at the last day. For 'this is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil;' John iii. 19. Hence it follows:

That the will and affections being more corrupted than the understanding, as is evident from their opposition unto, and defeating of, its manifold convictions; no man doth *actually* apply his mind to the receiving of the things of the

Spirit of God to the utmost of that ability which he hath. For all unregenerate men are invincibly impeded therein, by the corrupt stubbornness and perverseness of their wills and affections. There is not in any of them a due improvement of the capacity of their natural faculties, in the use of means, for the discharge of their duty towards God herein. And what hath been pleaded, may suffice for the vindication of this divine testimony, concerning the disability of the mind of man in the state of nature, to understand and receive the things of the Spirit of God in a spiritual and saving manner, however they are proposed unto it; which those who are otherwise minded may despise whilst they please; but are no way able to answer or evade.

And hence we may judge of that paraphrase and exposition of this place which one hath given of late; ‘But such things as these, they that are led only by the light of human reason, the learned philosophers, &c. do absolutely despise, and so hearken not after the doctrine of the gospel, for it seems folly to them. Nor can they by any study of their own come to the knowledge of them; for they are only to be had by understanding the prophecies of the Scripture, and other such means which depend on divine revelation, the voice from heaven, descent of the Holy Ghost, miracles,’ &c. (1.) The natural man is here allowed to be the rational man, the learned philosopher, one walking by the light of human reason, which complies not with their exception to this testimony, who would have only such an one as is sensual and given up unto brutish affections to be intended. But yet neither is there any ground (though some countenance be given to it by Hierome) to fix this interpretation unto that expression. If the apostle may be allowed to declare his own mind, he tells us, that he intends every one of what sort and condition soever, ‘who hath not received the Spirit of Christ.’ (2.) Οὐδέχεται, is paraphrased by, ‘doth absolutely despise;’ which neither the word here, nor elsewhere, nor its disposal in the present connexion, will allow of, or give countenance unto. The apostle, in the whole discourse, gives an account why so few received the gospel, especially of those who seemed most likely so to do, being wise and learned men; and the gospel being no less than the wisdom of God. And the reason hereof he gives from their disability to re-

ceive the things of God, and their hatred of them, or opposition to them, neither of which can be cured but by the Spirit of Christ. (3.) The apostle treats not of what men could find out by any study of their own, but of what they did, and would do, and could do no otherwise, when the gospel was proposed, declared, and preached, unto them. They did not, they could not, receive, give assent unto, or believe, the spiritual mysteries therein revealed. (4.) This preaching of the gospel unto them, was accompanied with, and managed with, those evidences mentioned; namely, the testimonies of the prophecies of Scripture, miracles, and the like, in the same way and manner, and unto the same degree, as it was towards them by whom it was received and believed. In the outward means of revelation and its proposition, there was no difference. (5.) The proper meaning of οὐ δέχεται 'receiveth not,' is given us in the ensuing reason and explanation of it; οὐ δύναται γινῶναι, 'he cannot know them;' that is, unless he be spiritually enabled thereunto by the Holy Ghost. And this is farther confirmed in the reason subjoined, 'because they are spiritually discerned.' And to wrest this unto the outward means of revelation, which is directly designed to express the internal manner of the mind's reception of things revealed, is to wrest the Scripture at pleasure. How much better doth the description given by Chrysostom of a natural and spiritual man, give light unto and determine the sense of this place. Ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος, ὁ δια σάρκα ζῶν, καὶ μήπω φωτισθεὶς τὸν νοῦν διὰ πνεύματος, ἀλλὰ μόνην τὴν ἔμφυτον καὶ ἀνθρωπίνην σύνεσιν ἔχων, ἐν τῶν ἀπάντων ψυχᾷς ἐμβάλλει ὁ δημιουργός. 'A natural man is he who lives in or by the flesh, and hath not his mind as yet enlightened by the Spirit; but only hath that inbred human understanding which the Creator hath endued the minds of all men withal.' And ὁ πνευματικὸς, ὁ διὰ πνεῦμα ζῶν φωτισθεὶς τὸν νοῦν. Διὰ πνεύματος, οὐ μόνην τὴν ἔμφυτον καὶ ἀνθρωπίνην σύνεσιν ἔχων, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον τὴν χαριθεύσαν πνευματικὴν, ἐν τῶν πιστῶν ψυχᾷς ἐμβάλλει τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα. 'The spiritual man is he who liveth by the Spirit, having his mind enlightened by him; having not only an inbred human understanding, but rather a spiritual understanding, bestowed on him graciously; which the Holy Ghost endues the minds of believers withal.' But we proceed.

Having cleared the impotency to discern *spiritual* things

spiritually, that is, in the minds of natural men, by reason of their spiritual blindness, or that *darkness* which is in them; it remains that we consider what is the *power* and efficacy of this darkness, to keep them in a constant and unconquerable *aversion* from God and the gospel. To this purpose, some testimonies of Scripture must be also considered. For notwithstanding all other notions and disputes in this matter, for the most part compliant with the inclinations and affections of corrupted nature, by them must our judgments be determined, and into them is our faith to be resolved. I say then, that this spiritual darkness hath a power over the minds of men to alienate them from God; that is, this which the Scripture so calleth, is not a mere privation, with an impotency in the faculty ensuing thereon; but a depraved habit, which powerfully, and, as unto them in whom it is, unavoidably influenceth their wills and affections into an opposition unto spiritual things; the effects whereof the world is visibly filled withal at this day. And this I shall manifest, first in general, and then in particular instances. And by the whole it will be made to appear, that not only the act of believing and turning unto God, is the sole work and effect of grace, which the Pelagians did not openly deny, and the semi-pelagians did openly grant; but also that all power and ability for it, properly so called, is from grace also.

(1.) Col. i. 13. We are said to be delivered, ἐκ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σκοτους; from ‘the power of darkness.’ The word signifies such a power as consists in authority or rule, that bears sway, and commands them who are obnoxious unto it. Hence the sins of men, especially those of a greater guilt than ordinary, are called ‘works of darkness;’ Eph. v. 11. not only such as are usually perpetrated in the dark, but such as the darkness also of men’s minds doth incline them unto, and naturally produce. That also which is here called the ‘power of darkness,’ is called the ‘power of Satan;’ Acts xxvi. 18. For I acknowledge that it is not only or merely the internal darkness, or blindness of the minds of men in the state of nature that is here intended, but the whole state of darkness, with what is contributed thereunto by Satan and the world. This the prophet speaks of, Isa. lx. 2. ‘Behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people, but the Lord shall arise upon thee.’ Such a darkness it is as no-

thing can dispel, but the light of the Lord arising on and in the souls of men; but all is resolved into internal darkness. For Satan hath no power in men, nor authority over them, but what he hath by means of this darkness. For by this alone doth that prince of the power of the air work effectually in the children of disobedience; Eph. ii. 2. Hereby doth he seduce, pervert, and corrupt them; nor hath he any way to fortify and confirm their minds against the gospel, but by increasing this blindness or darkness in them; 2 Cor. iv. 4.

An evidence of the power and efficacy of this darkness, we may find in the devil himself. The apostle Peter tells us, that the angels who sinned are 'kept unto judgment under chains of darkness;' 2 Pet. ii. 4. It is plain that there is an allusion in the words unto the dealings of men with stubborn and heinous malefactors. They do not presently execute them upon their offences, nor when they are first apprehended. They must be kept unto a solemn day of trial and judgment. But yet to secure them that they make no escape, they are bound with chains which they cannot deliver themselves from. Thus God deals with fallen angels. For, although yet they go to and fro in the earth, and walk up and down in it, as also in the air, in a seeming liberty, and at their pleasure, yet are they under such chains as shall securely hold them unto the great day of their judgment and execution. That they may not escape their appointed doom, they are held in 'chains of darkness.' They are always so absolutely and universally under the power of God, as that they are not capable of the vanity of a thought for the subducing themselves from under it. But whence is it that in all their wisdom, experience, and long-continued prospect which they have had of their future eternal misery, none of them ever have attempted, or ever will, a mitigation of their punishment or deliverance from it, by repentance and compliance with the will of God? This is alone from their own darkness, in the chains whereof they are so bound; that although they believe their own everlasting ruin, and tremble at the vengeance of God therein, yet they cannot but continue in their course of mischief, disobedience, and rebellion. And although natural men are not under the same obduracy with them, as having a way of escape and deliverance provided for them, and proposed unto them, which they have

not; yet this darkness is no less effectual to bind them in a state of sin, without the powerful illumination of the Holy Ghost, than it is in the devils themselves. And this may be farther manifested by the consideration of the instances wherein it puts forth its efficacy in them.

First, It fills the mind with *enmity* against God, and all the things of God. Col. i. 21. 'You were enemies in your minds.' Rom. viii. 7. 'The carnal mind is enmity against God, it is not subject unto the law of God, neither indeed can it be.' And the carnal mind, there intended, is that which is in every man who hath not received, who is not made partaker of, the Spirit of God, in a peculiar saving manner, as is at large declared in the whole discourse of the apostle; ver. 5, 6. 9—11. So that the pretence is vain and directly contradictory to the apostle, that it is only one sort of fleshly sensual unregenerate men, whom he intends. This confidence, not only in perverting, but openly opposing, of the Scripture, is but of a late date, and that which few of the ancient enemies of the grace of God did rise up unto. Now God in himself, is infinitely good and desirable. 'How great is his goodness! How great is his beauty!' Zech. ix. 17. There is nothing in him but what is suited to draw out, to answer and fill, the affections of the soul. Unto them that know him, he is the only delight, rest, and satisfaction. Whence then doth it come to pass, that the minds of men should be filled and possessed with enmity against him? Enmity against, and hatred of, him who is absolute and infinite goodness, seem incompatible unto our human affections. But they arise from this darkness, which is the corruption and depravation of our nature; by the ways that shall be declared.

It is pretended and pleaded by some in these days, that upon an apprehension of the goodness of the nature of God, as manifested in the works and light of nature, men may, without any other advantages, love him above all, and be accepted with him. But as this would render Christ and the gospel, as objectively proposed, if not useless, yet not indispensably necessary, so I desire to know how this enmity against God, which the minds of all natural men are filled withal, if we may believe the apostle, comes to be removed and taken away, so as that they should love him above all,

seeing these things are absolute extremes and utterly irreconcilable ? This must be either by the power of the mind itself upon the proposal of God's goodness unto it, or by the effectual operation in it and upon it of the Spirit of God. Any other way is not pretended unto; and the latter, is that which we contend for. And as to the former, the apostle supposeth the goodness of God, and the proposal of this goodness of God unto the minds of men; not only as revealed in the works of nature, but also in the law and gospel, and yet affirms that the carnal mind, which is in every man, is enmity against him. And in enmity, there is neither disposition nor inclination to love. In such persons, there can be no more true love of God, than is consistent with enmity to him and against him.

All discourses, therefore, about the acceptance they shall find with God, who love him above all for his goodness, without any farther communications of Christ or the Holy Spirit unto them, are vain and empty, seeing there never was, nor ever will be, any one dram of such love unto God in the world. For whatever men may fancy concerning the love of God, where this enmity arising from darkness is unremoved by the Spirit of grace and love, it is but a self-pleasing with those false notions of God, which this darkness suggests unto them. With these they either please themselves or are terrified, as they represent things to their corrupt reason and fancies. Men in this state, destitute of divine revelation, did of old seek after God, Acts xvii. 27. as men groping in the dark. And although they did in some measure find him and know him, so far as that from the things that were made they came to be acquainted with his eternal power and Godhead; Rom. i. 20, 21, yet he was still absolutely unto them the unknown God; Acts xvii. 23. whom they ignorantly worshipped; that is, they directed some worship to him in the dedication of their altars, but knew him not; *ὅν ἀγνοοῦντες εὐσεβείῃς*. And that they entertained all of them false notions of God, is from hence evident that none of them, either by virtue of their knowledge of him, did free themselves from gross idolatry, which is the greatest enmity unto him; or did not countenance themselves in many impieties or sins, from those notions they had received of God and his goodness; Rom. i. 20, 21. The issue of their disquisi-

tions after the nature of God was, that 'they glorified him not, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened.' Upon the common principles of the first being and the chiefest good, their fancy or imaginations raised such notions of God, as pleased and delighted them, and drew out their affections; which was not, indeed, unto God and his goodness, but unto the effect and product of their own imaginations. And hence it was, that those that had the most raised apprehensions concerning the nature, being, and goodness of God, with the highest expressions of a constant admiration of him and love unto him, when by any means the true God, indeed, was declared unto them as he hath revealed himself, and as he will be known, these great admirers and lovers of divine goodness were constantly the greatest opposers of him, and enemies unto him. And an uncontrollable evidence this is, that the love of divine goodness, which some do fancy, in persons destitute of supernatural revelation and other aids of grace, was in the best of them placed on the products of their own imaginations, and not on God himself.

But omitting them, we may consider the effects of this darkness working by enmity in the minds of them who have the word preached unto them. Even in these, until effectually prevailed on by victorious grace, either closely or openly it exerts itself. And however they may be doctrinally instructed in true notions concerning God and his attributes, yet in the application of them unto themselves, or in the consideration of their own concernment in them, they always err in their hearts. All the practical notions they have of God, tend to alienate their hearts from him; and that either by contempt, or by an undue dread and terror. For some apprehend him slow and regardless of what they do, at least one that is not so severely displeased with them, as that it should be necessary for them to seek a change of their state and condition. They think that God is such an one as themselves; Psal. l. 21. at least that he doth approve them, and will accept them, although they should continue in their sins. Now this is a fruit of the highest enmity against God, though palliated with the pretence of the most raised notions and apprehensions of his goodness. For as it is a heinous crime to imagine an outward shape of the divine nature,

and that God is like to men or beasts, the height of the sin of the most gross idolaters; Rom. i. 23. Psal. cvi. 20. so it is a sin of a higher provocation, to conceive him so far like unto bestial men, as to approve and accept of them in their sins. Yet this false notion of God, even when his nature and will are objectively revealed in the word, this darkness doth and will maintain in the minds of men, whereby they are made obstinate in their sin to the uttermost. And where this fails, it will on the other hand represent God all fire and fury, inexorable and untractable. See Micah vi. 6. Isa. xxxiii. 14. Gen. iv. 13.

Moreover, this darkness fills the mind with enmity against all the ways of God. For as 'the carnal mind is enmity against God,' so 'it is not subject unto his law, neither can so be.' So the apostle informs us, that men are 'alienated from the life of God,' or dislike the whole way and work of living unto him, by reason of the ignorance and blindness that is in them; Eph. iv. 18. and it esteems the whole rule and measure of it to be foolishness; 1 Cor. i. 18. 20. But I must not too long insist on particulars, although in these days, wherein some are so apt to boast in proud swelling words of vanity, concerning the power and sufficiency of the mind, even with respect unto religion and spiritual things, it cannot be unseasonable to declare what is the judgment of the Holy Ghost, plainly expresseed in the Scriptures in this matter; and one testimony thereof will be of more weight with the disciples of Jesus Christ, than a thousand declamations to the contrary.

Secondly, This darkness fills the mind with *wills* or perverse lusts that are directly contrary to the will of God; Eph. ii. 3. There are *θελήματα διανοιῶν*, the 'wills or lusts of the mind;' that is, the *habitual inclinations* of the mind unto sensual objects. It 'minds earthly things;' Phil. iii. 19. And hence the mind itself is said to be fleshly; Col. ii. 18. As unto spiritual things, it is born of the flesh, and is flesh. It likes, savours, approves of, nothing but what carnal, sensual, and vain. Nothing is suited unto it, but what is either curious, or needless, or superstitious, or sensual and earthly. And, therefore, are men said to walk in the vanity of their minds. In the whole course of their lives they are influenced by a predominant principle of vanity. And in this state the

thoughts and imaginations of the mind are always set on work to provide sensual objects for this vain and fleshly frame; hence are they said to 'be evil continually;' Gen. vi. 5. This is the course of a darkened mind. Its vain frame or inclination, the fleshly will of it stirs up vain thoughts and imaginations; it 'minds the things of the flesh;' Rom. viii. 5. These thoughts fix on, and represent unto the mind, objects suited unto the satisfaction of its vanity and lust. With these the mind committeth folly and lewdness, and the fleshly habit thereof is thereby heightened and confirmed; and this multiplies imaginations of its own kind, whereby men 'inflammeth themselves;' Isa. lvii. 5. waxing worse and worse. And the particular bent of these imaginations, doth answer the predominancy of any especial lust in the heart or mind.

It will be objected, That although these things are so in many, especially in persons that are become profligate in sin, yet proceeding from their wills and corrupt sensual affections, they argue not an impotency in the mind to discern and receive spiritual things; but notwithstanding these enormities of some, the faculty of the mind is still endued with a power of discerning, judging, and believing, spiritual things in a due manner.

Ans. 1. We do not now discourse concerning the weakness and disability of the mind, in and about these things, which is as it were a natural impotency, like blindness in the eyes, which hath been both explained and confirmed before. But it is a moral disability, and that as unto all the powers of nature invincible, as unto the right receiving of spiritual things, which ensues on that corrupt depravation of the mind in the state of nature, that the Scripture calls darkness or blindness, which we intend.

2. Our present testimonies have sufficiently confirmed, that all the instances mentioned, do proceed from the depravation of the mind. And whereas this is common unto, and equal in, all unregenerate men, if it produce not in all effects to the same degree of enormity, it is from some beams of light, and secret convictions from the Holy Spirit, as we shall afterward declare.

3. Our only aim is to prove the indispensable necessity of a saving work of illumination on the mind, to enable it to

receive spiritual things spiritually, which appears sufficiently from the efficacy of this darkness, whence a man hath no ability to disentangle or save himself. For, also,

Thirdly, It fills the mind with *prejudices* against spiritual things, as proposed unto them in the gospel. And from these prejudices it hath neither light nor power to extricate itself. No small part of its depravation consists in its readiness to embrace them, and pertinacious adherence unto them. Some few of these prejudices may be instanced.

1. The mind, from the darkness that is in it, apprehends that spiritual things, the things of the gospel, as they are proposed, have an utter inconsistency with true contentment and satisfaction. These are the things which all men by various ways do seek after. This is the scent and chase which they so eagerly pursue in different tracks, and paths innumerable. Something they would attain or arrive unto, which should satisfy their minds and fill their desires. And this commonly before they have had any great consideration of the proposals of the gospel, they suppose themselves in the way at least unto, by those little tastes of satisfaction unto their lusts, which they have obtained in the ways of the world. And these hopeful beginnings they will not forego. Isa. lvii. 10. 'Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way; yet saidst thou not, There is no hope; thou hast found the life of thine hand, therefore thou wast not grieved.' They are ready oft-times to faint in the pursuit of their lusts, because of the disappointments which they find in them, or the evils that attend them. For which way soever they turn themselves in their course, they cannot but see, or shrewdly suspect, that the end of them is, or will be, vanity and vexation of spirit. But yet they give not over the pursuit wherein they are engaged; they say not, 'There is no hope.' And the reason hereof is, because they 'find the life of their hand.' Something or other comes in daily, either from the work that they do, or the company they keep, or the expectation they have, which preserves their hope alive, and makes them unwilling to forego their present condition. They find it to be none of the best, but do not think there can be a better. And, therefore, their only design is to improve or to thrive in it. If they might obtain more mirth, more wealth, more strength and health, more assurance of their lives,

more power, more honour, more suitable objects unto their sensual desires, then they suppose it would be better than it is; but as for any thing which differeth from these in the whole kind, they can entertain no respect for it. In this state and condition, spiritual things, the spiritual mysterious things of the gospel are proposed unto them. At first view they judge that these things will not assist them in the pursuit or improvement of their carnal satisfactions. And so far they are in the right, they judge not amiss. The things of the gospel will give neither countenance nor help to the lusts of men. Nay, it is no hard matter for them to come to a discovery, that the gospel being admitted in the power of it, will crucify and mortify those corrupt affections, which hitherto they have been given up to the pursuit of. For this it plainly declares, Col. iii. 1—5. Tit. ii. 11, 12.

There are but two things wherein men seeking after contentment and satisfaction are concerned. First, The objects of their lusts or desires, and then those lusts and desires themselves. The former may be considered in their own nature, so they are indifferent; or as they are capable of being abused to corrupt and sinful ends. In the first way, as the gospel condemns them not, so it adds nothing to them unto those by whom it is received. It gives not men more riches, wealth, or honour, than they had before in the world. It promises no such thing unto them that do receive it, but rather the contrary. The latter consideration of them, it condemns and takes away. And for the desires of men themselves, the avowed work of the gospel is to mortify them. And hereby the naturally corrupt relation, which is between these desires and their objects, is broken and dissolved. The gospel leaves men, unless upon extraordinary occasions, their names, their reputations, their wealth, their honours, if lawfully obtained and possessed. But the league that is between the mind and these things in all natural men must be broken. They must no more be looked on as the chiefest good, or in the place thereof, nor as the matter of satisfaction, but must give place to spiritual, unseen, eternal things. This secretly alienates the carnal mind, and a prejudice is raised against it, as that which would deprive the soul of all its present satisfaction, and offers nothing in the room of them that is suitable to any of its desires or affec-

tions. For by reason of the darkness that it is under the power of, it can neither discern the excellency of the spiritual and heavenly things which are proposed unto it, nor have any affections whereunto they are proper and suited, so that the soul should go forth after them. Hereby this prejudice becomes invincible in their souls. They neither do, nor can, nor will, admit of those things which are utterly inconsistent with all things, wherein they hope or look for satisfaction. And men do but please themselves with dreams and fancies, who talk of such a reasonableness and excellency in gospel truths, as that the mind of a natural man will discern such a suitableness in them unto itself, so as thereon to receive and embrace them. Nor do any, for the most part, give a greater evidence of the prevalency of the darkness and enmity that is in carnal minds, against the spiritual things of the gospel, as to their life and power, than those who most pride and please themselves in such discourses.

2. The mind by this darkness, is filled with *prejudices* against the mystery of the gospel in a peculiar manner. The hidden spiritual wisdom of God in it as natural men cannot receive, so they do despise it; and all the parts of its declaration they look upon as empty and unintelligible notions. And this is that prejudice whereby this darkness prevails in the minds of men, otherwise knowing and learned; it hath done so in all ages, and in none more effectually than in that which is present. But there is a sacred, mysterious, spiritual wisdom in the gospel, and the doctrine of it. This is fanatical, chimerical, and foolish, to the wisest in the world, whilst they are under the power of this darkness. To demonstrate the truth hereof, is the design of the apostle Paul; 1 Cor. i. ii. For he directly affirms that the doctrine of the gospel, is the wisdom of God in a mystery; that this wisdom cannot be discerned nor understood by the wise and learned men of the world, who have not received the Spirit of Christ; and therefore, that the things of it are weakness and foolishness unto them. And that which is foolish, is to be despised; yea, folly is the only object of contempt. And hence we see that some with the greatest pride, scorn, and contempt, imaginable, do despise the purity, simplicity, and whole mystery of the gospel, who yet profess they believe it. But to clear the whole na-

ture of this prejudice, some few things may be distinctly observed.

(1.) There are two sorts of things declared in the gospel. First, Such as are *absolutely its own*, that are proper and peculiar unto it; such as have no footsteps in the law, or in the light of nature, but are of a pure revelation peculiar to the gospel. Of this nature, are all things concerning the love and will of God in Christ Jesus. The mystery of his incarnation, of his offices, and whole mediation, of the dispensation of the Spirit, and our participation thereof, and our union with Christ thereby; our adoption, justification, and effectual sanctification, thence proceeding; in brief, every thing that belongs unto the purchase and application of saving-grace, is of this sort. These things are purely and properly *evangelical*, peculiar to the gospel alone. Hence the apostle Paul, unto whom the dispensation of it was committed, puts that eminency upon them, that in comparison, he resolved to insist on nothing else in his preaching; 1 Cor. ii. 2. And to that purpose doth he describe his ministry; Eph. iii. 7—11.

(2.) There are such things declared and enjoined in the gospel, as have their foundation in the *law and light of nature*. Such are all the moral duties which are taught therein. And two things may be observed concerning them: [1.] That they are in some measure known unto men *aliunde* from other principles. The inbred concreated light of nature, doth, though obscurely, teach and confirm them. So the apostle, speaking of mankind in general, saith, τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς, Rom. i. 19. ‘That which may be known of God, is manifested in themselves.’ The essential properties of God rendering our moral duty to him necessary, are known by the light of nature. And by the same light, are men able to make a judgment of their actions, whether they be good or evil; Rom. ii. 14, 15. And this is all the light which some boast of, as they will one day find to their disappointment. [2.] There is on all men an *obligation unto obedience* answerable to their light concerning these things. The same law and light which discovereth these things, doth also enjoin their observance. Thus is it with all men, antecedently unto the preaching of the gospel unto them.

In this estate, the gospel *superadds* two things unto the minds of men. 1st. It directs us unto a right performance of these things, from a right principle, by a right rule, and to a right end and purpose, so that they and we in them may obtain acceptance with God. Hereby it gives them a new *nature*, and turns *moral duties* into *evangelical obedience*. 2nd. By a communication of that Spirit which is annexed unto its dispensation, it supplies us with strength for their performance, in the manner it prescribes.

Hence it follows, that this is the method of the gospel. First, It proposeth and declareth things which are *properly* and peculiarly its own. So the apostle sets down the constant entrance of his preaching; 1 Cor. xv. 3. It reveals its *own mysteries* to lay them as the foundation of faith and obedience. It inlays them in the mind, and thereby conforms the whole soul unto them: see Rom. vi. 17. Gal. iv. 19. Tit. ii. 11, 12. 1 Cor. iii. 11. 2 Cor. iii. 18. This foundation being laid, without which, it hath as it were nothing to do with the souls of men, nor will proceed unto any other thing, with them by whom this its first work is refused, it then *grafts all duties* of moral obedience on this stock of faith in Christ Jesus. This is the method of the gospel, which the apostle Paul observeth in all his Epistles. First, He declares the *mysteries of faith* that are peculiar to the gospel, and then descends unto those *moral duties* which are regulated thereby.

But the *prejudice* we mentioned, inverts the *order* of these things. Those who are under the power of it, when on various accounts they give admittance unto the gospel in general, yet they fix their minds, firstly and principally, on the things which have their foundation in the law and light of nature. These they know and have some acquaintance with in themselves, and therefore cry them up, although not in their proper place, nor to their proper end. These they make the foundation, according to the place which they held in the law of nature and covenant of works, whereas the gospel allows them to be only necessary superstructions on the foundation. But resolving to give unto moral duties the pre-eminence in their minds, they consider afterward the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, with one or other of these effects: For, 1. Some in a manner *wholly despise them*,

reproaching those by whom they are singularly professed. What is contained in them, is of no importance in their judgment, compared with the more necessary duties of morality, which they pretend to embrace; and to acquit themselves of the trouble of a search into them, reject them as unintelligible or unnecessary. Or, 2. they will by forced interpretations, enervating the spirit, and perverting the mystery of them, *square* and fit them to their own low and carnal apprehensions. They would reduce the gospel, and all the mysteries of it, to their own light as some, to reason as others, to philosophy as the rest; and let them who comply not with their weak and carnal notions of things, expect all the contemptuous reproaches which the proud pretenders unto science and wisdom of old, cast upon the apostles and first preachers of the gospel. Hereby advancing morality above the mystery and grace of the gospel, they at once reject the gospel, and destroy morality also; for taking it off from its proper foundation, it falls into the dirt, whereof the conversation of the men of this persuasion, is no small evidence.

From this prejudice it is, that the *spiritual things of the gospel*, are by many despised and contemned. So God spake of Ephraim; Hos. viii. 12. ‘I have written to him the great things of the law, but they were counted as a strange thing.’ The things intended were רבו תורתי the ‘great, manifold, various things of the law.’ That which the law was then unto that people, that is the gospel now unto us. The ‘Torah’ was the entire means of God’s communicating his mind and will unto them, as his whole counsel is revealed unto us by the gospel. These things he wrote unto them, or made them in themselves and their revelation plain and perspicuous. But when all was done, they were esteemed by them כבמוֹר, as is also the gospel, ‘a thing foreign’ and alien unto the minds of men, which they intend not to concern themselves in. They will heed the things that are cognate unto the principles of their nature, things morally good or evil; but for the hidden wisdom of God in the mystery of the gospel, it is esteemed by them as ‘a strange thing.’ And innumerable other prejudices of the same nature, doth this darkness fill the minds of men withal, whereby they are powerfully, and as unto any light or strength of their own,

invincibly kept off from receiving of spiritual things in a spiritual manner.

Again, The power and efficacy of this darkness, in and upon the souls of unregenerate men, will be farther evidenced by the consideration of its especial subject, or the nature and use of that faculty which is affected with it. This is the mind or understanding. Light and knowledge, are intellectual virtues or perfections of the mind; and that in every kind whatever, whether in things natural, moral, or spiritual. The darkness whereof we treat, is the privation of spiritual light, or the want of it. And, therefore, are they opposed unto one another; ‘You were darkness, but are light in the Lord;’ Eph. v. 8. It is, therefore, the mind or understanding, which is affected with this darkness, which is vitiated and depraved by it.

Now the mind may be considered two ways: 1. As it is *theoretical* or contemplative, discerning and judging of things proposed unto it. So it is its office to find out, consider, discern, and apprehend, the truth of things. In the case before us, it is the duty of the mind to apprehend, understand, and receive, the truths of the gospel as they are proposed unto it, in the manner of, and unto, the end of their proposal. This, as we have manifested, by reason of its depravation, it neither doth, nor is able to do; John i. 5. 2 Cor. ii. 14. 2. It may be considered as it is *practical*, as to the power it hath to direct the whole soul, and determine the will unto actual operation according to its light. I shall not inquire at present whether the will as to the *specification* of its acts, do necessarily follow the determination of the mind or practical understanding. I aim at no more, but that it is the *directive faculty* of the soul as unto all moral and spiritual operations. Hence it follows:

(1.) That nothing in the soul, nor the will and affections, can will, desire, or cleave unto any good, but what is presented unto them by the *mind*, and as it is presented. That good whatever it be which the mind cannot discover, the will cannot choose, nor the affections cleave unto. All their actings about and concerning them, are not such as answer their duty. This our Saviour directs us to the consideration of; Matt. vi. 22, 23. ‘The light of the body is the eye, if therefore thine eye be single, the whole body shall be full of

light. But if thine eye be evil, the whole body shall be full of darkness; if therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness?' As the eye is naturally the light of the body, or the means thereof, so is the mind unto the soul. And if darkness be in the eye, not only the eye but the whole body is in darkness, because in the eye alone is the light of the whole; so if the mind be under darkness, the whole soul is so also, because it hath no light but by the mind. And hence both is illumination sometimes taken for the whole work of conversion unto God, and the spiritual actings of the mind by the renovation of the Holy Ghost, are constantly proposed, as those which precede any gracious actings in the will, heart, and life; as we shall shew afterward.

(2.) As the soul can no way, by any other of its faculties, receive, embrace, or adhere unto, that *good* in a saving manner, which the mind doth not savingly apprehend; so where the mind is *practically* deceived, or any way captivated under the power of prejudices, the will and the affections, can no way free themselves from entertaining that *evil* which the mind hath perversely assented unto. Thus where the mind is reprobate or void of a sound judgment; so as to call good evil, and evil good; the heart, affections, and conversation will be conformable thereunto; Rom. i. 28, 29. And in the Scripture, the deceit of the mind is commonly laid down as the principle of all sin whatever; 1 Tim. ii. 14. Heb. iii. 12, 13. 2 Cor. xi. 3.

And this is a brief delineation of the state of the mind of man whilst unregenerate, with respect unto spiritual things. And from what hath been spoken, we do conclude that the mind in the state of nature is so depraved, vitiated, and corrupted, that it is not able, upon the proposal of spiritual things unto it in the dispensation and preaching of the gospel, to understand, receive, and embrace them, in a spiritual and saving manner, so as to have the sanctifying power of them thereby brought into and fixed in the soul, without an internal, especial, immediate, supernatural, effectual, enlightening act of the Holy Ghost; which what it is, and wherein it doth consist, shall be declared.