

BOOK I.  
GENERAL PRINCIPLES

CONCERNING THE

HOLY SPIRIT AND HIS WORK.

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CHAP. I.

1 Cor. xii. 1. opened. Πνευματικά, *spiritual gifts*. *Their grant unto, use, and abuse, in that church. Jesus, how called Anathema; impiety of the Jews. How called Lord. The foundation of church-order and worship. In what sense we are enabled by the Spirit to call Jesus Lord. The Holy Spirit the author of all gifts; why called God, and the Lord. General distribution of spiritual gifts. Proper end of their communication. Nine sorts of gifts; abuse of them in the church. Their tendency unto peace and order. General design of the ensuing discourse concerning the Spirit and his dispensation. Importance of the doctrine concerning the Spirit of God, and his operations. Reasons hereof. Promise of the Spirit to supply the absence of Christ, as to his human nature. Concernment thereof. Work of the Spirit in the ministration of the gospel. All saving good communicated unto us, and wrought in us, by him. Sin against the Holy Ghost irremissible. False pretences unto the Spirit dangerous. Pretences unto the spirit of prophecy under the Old Testament. Two sorts of false prophets: the first; the second sort. Pretenders under the New Testament. The rule for the trial of such pretenders, 1 John iv. 1—3. Rules to this purpose under the Old and New Testament compared. A false spirit set up against the Spirit of God, examined. False and noxious opinions concerning the Spirit, and how to be obviated. Reproaches of the Spirit and his work. Principles and occasions of the apostacy of churches under the law and gospel. Dispensation of the Spirit not confined to the first ages of the church. The great necessity of a diligent inquiry into the things taught, concerning the Spirit of God and his work.*

THE Apostle Paul, in the twelfth chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians, directs their exercise of spiritual gifts; concerning which, amongst other things and emergencies, they had made inquiry of him. This, the first words, wherewith he prefaceth his whole discourse, declare, ver. 1. ‘Now

concerning spiritual gifts;’ *περὶ δὲ τῶν πνευματικῶν*; that is, *χαρισμάτων*, as his ensuing declaration doth evince. And the imagination of some concerning spiritual persons to be here intended, contrary to the sense of all the ancients, is inconsistent with the context<sup>a</sup>. For as it was about spiritual gifts, and their exercise, that the church had consulted with him; so the whole series of his ensuing discourse is directive therein. And therefore in the close of it, contracting the design of the whole, he doth it in that advice, *ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ χαρίσματα τὰ κρείττονα*, ‘covet the best gifts;’ namely, among those which he proposed to treat of, and had done so accordingly, ver. 31. The *τὰ πνευματικὰ* of ver. 1. are the *τὰ χαρίσματα* of ver. 31. as it is expressed, chap. xiv. 1. *ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ πνευματικὰ*; that is, *χαρίσματα*, ‘desire spiritual gifts;’ whose nature and use you are now instructed in, as it first was proposed. Of these that church had received an abundant measure, especially of those that were extraordinary, and tended to the conviction of unbelievers. For the ‘Lord having much people in that city,’ whom he intended to call to the faith (Acts xviii. 9, 10.), not only encouraged our apostle against all fears and dangers to begin and carry on the work of preaching there, wherein he continued a year and six months (ver. 11.); but also furnished the first converts with such eminent, and some of them such miraculous gifts, as might be a prevalent means to the conversion of many others. For he will never be wanting to provide instruments and suitable means for the effectual attaining of any end that he aimeth at. In the use, exercise, and management, of these ‘spiritual gifts,’ that church, or sundry of the principal members of it, had fallen into manifold disorders; and abused them unto the matter of emulation and ambition, wherein other evils did ensue<sup>b</sup>; as the best of God’s gifts may be abused by the lusts of men, and the purest water may be tainted by the earthen vessels whereinto it is poured. Upon the information of some, who, loving truth, peace, and order, were troubled at these miscarriages, chap. i. 11. and

<sup>a</sup> Πνευματικὰ, τὰ σημεῖα καλῶν, ὅτι ταῦτα ἔργα τοῦ πνεύματος μόνου, οὐδὲν ἀνθρώπινης ἐπισηφερούσης σπουδῆς εἰς τὸ τὰ τοιαῦτα θαυματουργεῖν. Chrysost. in loc. So also Ambros. and Theophylact. in loc.

<sup>b</sup> Χαρίσματα δὲ εἶχον οἱ μὲν ἐλαττονα οἱ δὲ πλείων. Καὶ τοῦτο αἴτιον σχίσματος αὐτοῖς ἐγένετο; οὐ παρὰ τὸν οικειὰν φύσιν, ἀλλὰ παρὰ ἀγνωμοσύνην τῶν εἰληφότων. Οἷτε γὰρ τὰ μείζονα ἔχοντες ἐπήγοντο κατὰ τῶν τὰ ἐλάττονα κεκτημένων. Οὗτοι δὲ αὐτῶν ἤλων, καὶ τοῖς τὰ μείζονα ἔχουσιν ἐφθόσον. Chrysost. in loc.

in answer unto a letter of the whole church written unto him about these and other occurrences, chap. vii. 1, he gives them counsel and advice for the rectifying of these abuses. And first, to prepare them aright with humility and thankfulness becoming them who were intrusted with such excellent privileges as they had abused, and without which they could not receive the instruction which he intended them, he mindeth them of their former state and condition before their calling and conversion to Christ, ver. 2. ‘ You know that you were Gentiles, carried away with dumb idols, even as you were led;’ *ὡς ἂν ἠγέσθε ἀπαγόμενοι*, hurried with violent impressions from the devil, into the service of idols. This he mentions not to reproach them, but to let them know what frame of mind, and what fruit of life, might be justly expected from them, who had received such an alteration in their condition<sup>c</sup>. Particularly, as he elsewhere tells them, ‘ If they had not made themselves to differ from others;’ if they had ‘ nothing but what they had received,’ they should not boast nor exalt themselves above others, as though they had not received; chap. iv. 7. For it is a vain thing for a man to boast in himself of what he hath freely received of another, and never deserved so to receive it; as it is with all who have received either gifts or grace from God.

This alteration of their state and condition he farther declares unto them by the effects, and author of it, ver. 3: ‘ Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed; and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.’ The great difference which was then in the world, was concerning Jesus who was preached unto them all. Unbelievers, who were still carried with an *impetus* of mind and affections after ‘ dumb idols,’ being led and acted therein by the spirit of the devil, blasphemed, and said Jesus was anathema, or one accursed. They looked on him as a person to be detested and abominated as the common odium of their gods and men. Hence on the mention of him, they used to say, ‘ Jesus anathema,’ ‘ he is,’ or ‘ let him be, accursed,’ detested, destroyed.

<sup>c</sup> *Spiritualia illis traditurus, exemplum prioris conversationis memorat; ut simulatorum fuerunt forma colentes idola, et ducebantur duce voluntate dæmoniorum; ita et colentes deum sint forma legis dominicæ.* Ambros. in loc.

And in this blasphemy do the Jews continue to this day, hiding their cursed sentiments under a corrupt pronounciation of his name. For instead of ישוע, they write and call him ישו, the initial letters of ימח שמו וזכרו; that is, 'Let his name and memory be blotted out;' the same with 'Jesus anathema.' And this blasphemy of pronouncing Jesus accursed, was that wherewith the first persecutors of the church tried the faith of Christians, as Pliny in his epistle to Trajan, and Justin Martyr, with other apologists agree. And as the apostle says, those who did thus, 'did not so by the Spirit of God;' so he intends that they did it by the acting and instigation of the devil, the unclean spirit, which ruled in those children of disobedience. And this was the condition of these Corinthians themselves to whom he wrote, whilst they also were carried away after 'dumb idols.' On the other side, those that believed called Jesus 'Lord,' or professed that he was the Lord, and thereby avowed their faith in him and obedience unto him. Principally they owned him to be Jehovah, the Lord, over all God blessed for ever. For the name יהוה is every where in the New Testament expressed by κύριος, here used. He who thus professeth Jesus to be the Lord, in the first place. acknowledgeth him to be the true God. And then they professed him therewithal, to be their Lord, the Lord of their souls and consciences, unto whom they owed all subjection, and performed all obedience, as Thomas did in his great confession, 'My Lord, and my God;' John xx. 28. Now as he had before intimated that those who disowned him and called him accursed, did speak by the instinct and instigation of the devil by whom they were acted; so he lets them know, on the other hand, that no man can thus own and confess Jesus to be the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. But it may be said, that some acted by the unclean spirit confessed Christ to be the Lord. So did the man in the synagogue, who cried out, 'I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God;' Mark i. 23, 24. And ver] 34. He 'suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.' And the damsel possessed with a spirit of divination, cried after the apostle, saying, 'These men are the servants of the Most High God;' Acts xvi. 17. So also did the man who abode in the tombs, possessed with an unclean spirit, who cried out unto him, 'What have I to do

with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God;’ Mark v. 7. And other testimonies to the like purpose among the heathen, and from their oracles, might be produced. Ans. 1. Our apostle speaks of such a saying of Jesus to be Lord, as is accompanied with faith in him, and subjection of soul unto him, which is from the Holy Ghost alone. Thus none acted by the unclean spirit can call him Lord. 2. These acknowledgments were either, (1.) wrested from the devil, and were no small part of his punishment and torment; or, (2.) were designed by him with an intention to prejudice the glory of Christ, by his testimony, who was a liar from the beginning. And

*Malus bonum cum simulat, tunc est pessimus.*

These things therefore can have here no place<sup>d</sup>. Hereby then the apostle informs them wherein the foundation of all church relation, order, and worship, did consist. For whereas they had all respect unto the Lordship of Christ, and their acknowledgment thereof, this was not from themselves, but was a pure effect of the operation of the Holy Ghost in them, and towards them. And any thing of the like kind, which doth not proceed from the same cause and fountain, is of no use to the glory of God, nor of any advantage unto the souls of men.

Some think, that this saying of Jesus to be the Lord, is to be restrained unto the manner of speaking afterward insisted on<sup>e</sup>. For the apostle in the following verses treateth of those extraordinary gifts, which many in that church were then endowed withal. None can, saith he, say ‘Jesus is the Lord,’ in an extraordinary manner, with divers tongues, and in prophecy, but by the Holy Ghost. Without his especial assistance, none can eminently and miraculously declare him so to be. And, if this be so, it is likely that those before intended, who said Jesus was accursed, were some persons pretending to be acted, or really acted, by an extraordinary spirit, which the apostle declares not to be the Spirit of God. And so Chrysostom interprets those words of them who were visibly and violently acted by the devil. Many such instruments of his malice, did Satan stir

<sup>d</sup> Τὶ οὖν, οὐδεὶς δαίμων ὀνομάζει τὸν Θεόν; οὐχὶ οἱ δαιμονιζόμενοι ἔλεγον οὐδαμὲν σε τίς εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ; οὐχὶ Παῦλος ἔλεγον οὗτοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι δοῦλοι τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου εἶσιν; ἀλλὰ μαστιζόμενοι, ἀλλὰ ἀναγκασόμενοι; ἐκόντες δὲ καὶ μὴ μαστιγοῦμενοι, οὐδαμοῦ. Chrysost. in loc.

<sup>e</sup> Crell. de Sp. S. Prolegom. p. 29—31.

up in those days, to preserve, if it were possible, his tottering kingdom from ruin. But there is no necessity thus to restrain the words, or to affix this sense unto them. Yea, it seems to me to be inconsistent with the design of the apostle, and scope of the place. For intending to instruct the Corinthians, as was said, in the nature, use, and exercise, of spiritual gifts, he first lays down the spring and fountain of all saving profession of the gospel, which those gifts were designed to the furtherance and improvement of. Hereupon having minded them of their heathen state and condition before, he lets them know by what means they were brought into the profession of the gospel, and owning of Jesus to be the Lord, in opposition unto the dumb idols whom they had served. And this was by the author of those gifts, unto whose consideration he was now addressing himself. The great change wrought in them, as to their religion and profession, was by the Holy Ghost. For no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, which is the sum and substance of our Christian profession, but by him; though some think he hath little or no concern at all in this matter. But to say Christ is the Lord, includes two things; first, faith in him as Lord and Saviour. So was he declared and preached by the angels, Luke ii. 11. 'A Saviour which is Christ the Lord.' And this word Lord, includes as the dignity of his person, so his investiture with those offices which for our good this Lord did exercise and discharge. Secondly, the profession of that faith; which two, where they are sincere, do always accompany each other; Rom. x. 10. For as the saying of Jesus to be anathema, did comprise an open disclaimer and abrenunciation of him; so the calling of him Lord, expresseth the profession of our faith in him, and subjection unto him. And both these are here intended to be sincere and saving. For that faith and profession are intended whereby the church is built upon the rock; the same with that of Peter, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;' Matt. xvi. 16. And that these are the works of the Holy Ghost, which none of themselves are sufficient for, shall, God assisting, be afterward abundantly declared.

Having thus stated the original and foundation of the church, in its faith, profession, order, and worship, he farther acquaints them, that the same Spirit is likewise the author

of all those gifts, whereby it was to be built up and established, and whereby the profession of it might be enlarged, ver. 4. 'Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.' These are the things which he intendeth to discourse upon, wherein he enlargeth himself in the whole ensuing chapter. Now because the particulars here insisted on by him in the beginning of his discourse, will all of them occur unto us, and be called over again in their proper places, I shall only point unto the heads of the discourse, in the verses preceding the eleventh, which we principally aim at.

Treating, therefore, *περὶ τῶν πνευματικῶν*, 'of these spiritual things or gifts' in the church, he first declares their author, from whom they come, and by whom they are wrought and bestowed. Him he calls the 'Spirit;' ver. 4. the 'Lord;' ver. 5. 'God;' ver. 6. And to denote the oneness of their author, notwithstanding the diversity of the things themselves, he calls him the same Spirit, the same Lord, the same God. The words may be understood two ways; first, that the whole Trinity, and each person distinctly, should be intended in them. For consider the immediate operator of these gifts, and it is the Spirit, or the Holy Ghost, ver. 4. Consider them as to their procurement, and immediate authoritative collation, and so they are from Christ, the Son, the Lord, ver. 5. But as to their first original and fountain, they are from God, even the Father, ver. 6. And all these are one and the same. But rather the Spirit alone is intended, and hath this three-fold denomination given unto him; for as he is particularly denoted by the name of the Spirit, which he useth that we may know whom it is that eminently he intendeth, so he calls him both Lord and God, as to manifest his sovereign authority in all his works and administrations; so to ingenerate a due reverence in their hearts towards him with whom they had to do in this matter. And no more is intended in these three verses, but what is summed up, ver. 11. 'But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.'

Secondly, With respect unto their general nature, the apostle distributes them into 'gifts,' *χαρίσματα*, ver. 4. 'administrations,' *διακόναι*, ver. 5. 'operations,' *ἐνεργήματα*, ver. 6.

which division, with the reasons of it, will in our progress be farther cleared.

Thirdly, He declares the general end of the Spirit of God, in the communication of them, and the use of them in the church, ver. 7. 'But the manifestation of the Spirit is given unto every man to profit withal;' *φανέρωσις τοῦ πνεύματος*; Syr. גלינא רוחה, the 'revelation of the Spirit;' that is, the gifts whereby, and in whose exercise, he manifests and reveals his own presence, power, and effectual operation. And the Spirit of God hath no other aim in granting these his enlightening gifts, wherein he manifests his care of the church, and declares the things of the gospel unto any man, but that they should be used to the profit, advantage, and edification, of others. They are not bestowed on men, to make their secular gain or advantage by them, in riches, honour, or reputation, for which ends Simon the magician would have purchased them with his money, Acts viii. 19. No, nor yet merely for the good and benefit of the souls of them that do receive them, but for the edification of the church, and the furtherance of faith and profession in others. *Πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον*; 'ad id quod expedit, prodest;' 'for that which is expedient, useful, profitable,' namely, to the church; 1 Cor. vi. 12. x. 23. 2 Cor. viii. 10. Thus was the foundation of the first churches of the gospel laid by the Holy Ghost, and thus was the work of their building unto perfection, carried on by him. How far present churches do, or ought to, stand on the same bottom, how far they are carried on upon the same principles, is worth our inquiry, and will in its proper place fall under our consideration.

Fourthly, The apostle distributes the spiritual gifts then bestowed on the church, or some members of it, into nine particular heads or instances. As, 1. Wisdom. 2. Knowledge, ver. 8; or the word of wisdom, and the word of knowledge. 3. Faith. 4. Healing, ver. 9. 5. Working of miracles. 6. Prophecy. 7. Discerning of spirits. 8. Kinds of tongues. 9. Interpretation of tongues, ver. 10. And all these were extraordinary gifts, in the manner of the communication and exercise, which related unto the then present state of the church. What is yet continued analogous unto them, or holding proportion with them, must be farther inquired into; when also their especial nature will be unfolded.

But now if there be that great diversity of gifts in the church<sup>f</sup>, if so much difference in their administrations, how can it possibly be prevented but that differences and divisions will arise amongst them on whom they are bestowed, and those amongst whom they are exercised? It is true, this may so fall out and sometimes doth so, and *de facto*, it did so in this church of Corinth. One admired one gift, a second another of a different kind, and so the third. Accordingly, among those who had received them, one boasted of this or that particular gift and ability, and would be continually in its exercise to the exclusion and contempt of others, bestowed no less for the edification of the church than his own. And so far were they transported with vain-glory, and a desire of self-advancement, as that they preferred the use of those gifts in the church, which tended principally to beget astonishment and admiration in them which heard or beheld them, before those which were peculiarly useful unto the edification of the church itself; which evil in particular the apostle rebukes at large, chap. xiv. By this means the church came to be divided in itself, and almost to be broken in pieces, chap. i. 11, 12. So foolish oft-times are the minds of men; so liable to ~~be~~ imposed upon; so common is it for their lusts, seduced and principled by the crafts of Satan, to turn judgment into wormwood, and to abuse the most useful effects of divine grace and bounty. To prevent all these evils for the future, and to manifest how perfect a harmony there is in all these divers gifts and different administrations, at what an agreement they are among themselves in their tendency unto the same ends of the union and edification of the church, from what fountain of wisdom they do proceed, and with what care they ought to be used and improved; the apostle declares unto them both the author of them, and the rule he proceedeth by in their dispensation; ver. 11. ‘All these,’ saith he<sup>g</sup>, ‘worketh that one and self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.’

I shall not at present farther open or insist upon these

<sup>f</sup> Ex hoc capite et proximo licet conjicere quæ fuerint dotes illius veteris ecclesiæ Christianæ, priusquam tot ceremoniis, opibus, imperiis, copiis, bellis aliisque id genus esset onerata. Nunc fere tot præclara munia ad unam potestatem redacta sunt: h. e. Christi titulo palliatam Tyrannidem. Quid enim aliud est potestas nisi adsit animus Apostolicus? Erasm. Annot. ad. v. 4.

<sup>g</sup> Ἀποστέλλεται μὲν οἰκονομικῶς, ἐνεργεῖ δὲ αὐτεξουσίως. Basil. Homil. 15. fide de.

words. Frequent recourse must be had unto them in our progress, wherein they will be fully explicated as to what concerns the person of the Spirit, his will, and his operations, which are all asserted in them. For my purpose is, through the permission and assistance of God, to treat from hence of the name, nature, existence, and whole work of the Holy Spirit, with the grace of God through Jesus Christ in the communication of him unto the sons of men. A work in itself too great and difficult for me to undertake, and beyond my ability to manage unto the glory of God, or the edification of the souls of them that do believe. For 'who is sufficient for these things?' But yet I dare not utterly faint in it, nor under it, whilst I look unto him whose work it is, who 'giveth wisdom to them that lack it, and upbraideth them not;' Jam. i. 5. Our eyes, therefore, are unto him alone, who 'both supplieth seed to the sower,' and when he hath done, 'blesseth it with an increase.' The present necessity, importance, and usefulness, of this work, are the things which alone have engaged me into the undertaking of it. These, therefore, I shall briefly represent in some general considerations, before I insist on the things themselves, whose especial explanation is designed.

First, then, we may consider, That the doctrine of the Spirit of God, his work, and grace, is the *second great head* or principle of those gospel-truths wherein the glory of God, and the good of the souls of men, are most eminently concerned. And such also it is, that without it, without the knowledge of it in its truth, and the improvement of it in its power, the other will be useless unto those ends. For when God designed the great and glorious work of recovering fallen man, and the saving of sinners to the praise of the glory of his grace, he appointed in his infinite wisdom two great means thereof. The one was the giving of his Son for them; and the other was the giving of his Spirit unto them. And hereby was way made for the manifestation of the glory of the whole blessed Trinity, which is the utmost end of all the works of God. Hereby, were the love, grace, and wisdom of the Father, in the design and projection of the whole; the love, grace, and condescension of the Son, in the execution, purchase, and procurement, of grace and salvation for sinners; with the love, grace, and power of the Holy Spirit, in the effec-

tual application of all unto the souls of men, made gloriously conspicuous. Hence, from the first entrance of sin, there were two general heads of the promise of God unto men, concerning the means of their recovery and salvation. The one was that concerning the sending of his Son to be incarnate, to take our nature upon him, and to suffer for us therein; the other concerning the giving of his Spirit, to make the effects and fruits of the incarnation, obedience, and suffering, of his Son, effectual in us and towards us. To these heads may all the promises of God be reduced. Now because the former was to be the foundation of the latter, that was first to be laid down and most insisted on until it was actually accomplished. Hence the great promise of the Old Testament, the principal object of the faith, hope, and expectation of believers, was that concerning the coming of the Son of God in the flesh, and the work which he was to perform. Yet was this also, as we shall see in our progress, accompanied with a great intermixture of promises concerning the Holy Spirit, to render his coming and work effectual unto us. But when once that first work was fully accomplished, when the Son of God was come, and had destroyed the works of the devil, the principal remaining promise of the New Testament, the spring of all the rest, concerneth the sending of the Holy Spirit unto the accomplishment of his part of that great work which God had designed. Hence the Holy Ghost, the doctrine concerning his person, his work, his grace, is the most peculiar and principal subject of the Scriptures of the New Testament, and a most eminent immediate object of the faith of them that do believe. And this must be farther cleared, seeing we have to deal with some who will scarce allow him to be of any consideration in these matters at all. But I shall be brief in these previous testimonies hereunto, because the whole ensuing discourse is designed to the demonstration of the truth of this assertion.

1. It is of great moment, and sufficient of itself to maintain the cause as proposed, that when our Lord Jesus Christ was to leave the world, he promised to send his Holy Spirit unto his disciples to supply his absence. Of what use the presence of Christ was unto his disciples we may in some measure conceive; they knew full well whose hearts were

filled with sorrow upon the mention of his leaving of them; John xvi. 5, 6. Designing to relieve them in this great distress, which drew out the highest expressions of love, tenderness, compassion, and care towards them, he doth it principally by this promise; which he assures them shall be to their greater advantage than any they could receive by the continuance of his bodily presence amongst them. And to secure them hereof, as also to inform them of its great importance, he repeats it frequently unto them, and inculcates it upon them. Consider somewhat of what he says to this purpose in his last discourse with them; John xiv. 16—18. ‘I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you;’ that is, in and by this Holy Spirit. And ver. 25—27. ‘These things I have spoken unto you, being present with you; but the Comforter, who is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you,’ &c. And chap. xv. 25. ‘But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.’ And chap. xvi. 5—15. ‘Now I go my way to him that sent me, and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send him unto you. And when he is come he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he shall shew you things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall

receive of mine, and he shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shew it unto you<sup>h</sup>.' This was the great legacy which our Lord Jesus Christ, departing out of this world, bequeathed unto his sorrowful disciples. This he promiseth unto them as a sufficient relief against all their troubles, and a faithful guide in all their ways. And because of the importance of it unto them he frequently repeats it, and enlargeth upon the benefits that they should receive thereby; giving them a particular account why it would be more advantageous unto them than his own bodily presence. And therefore after his resurrection he minds them again of this promise, commanding them to act nothing towards the building of the church, until it was accomplished towards them; Acts i. 4, 5. 8. They would have been again embracing his human nature and rejoicing in it: but as he said unto Mary, 'Touch me not;' John xx. 17. to wean her from any carnal consideration of him; so he instructs them all now to look after and trust unto the promise of the Holy Ghost. Hence is that of our apostle; 'though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more;' 2 Cor. v. 16. For although it was a great privilege to have known Christ in this world after the flesh, yet it was much greater to enjoy him in the dispensation of the Spirit. And this was spoken by the apostle, as the ancients judge, to rebuke the boasting of some about their seeing the Lord in the flesh, who were thereon called *δεσπύουσιν*, whom he directs unto a more excellent knowledge of him. It is in vain pretended that it was the apostles only, and it may be some of the primitive Christians who were concerned in this

<sup>h</sup> Spiritus Sanctus ad hoc missus a Christo, ad hoc postulatus de Patre ut esset doctor veritatis, Christi vicarius. Tertul. advers. Hæret. cap. 28.

Quoniam Dominus in cælos esset abiturus, paracletum discipulis necessario dabat, ne illos quodammodo pupillos, quod minimè decebat, relinqueret; et sine avvocato et quodam tutore desereret. Hic est enim qui ipsorum animos mentesque firmavit, qui in ipsis illuminator rerum divinarum fuit; quo confirmati, pro nomine Domini nec carceres nec vincula timuerunt: quin imo ipsas seculi potestates et tormenta calcaverunt, armati jam scilicet per ipsum atque firmati, habentes in se dona quæ hic idem Spiritus ecclesiæ Christi sponsa, quasi quædam ornamenta distribuit et dirigit. Novatian. de Trinitat.

Totum ex Spiritu Sancti constat ducatu, quod devii diriguntur, quod impii convertuntur, quod debiles confirmantur. Spiritus rectus, Spiritus Sanctus, Spiritus principalis regit, componit, consummat et perficit, nostras inhabitat mentes, &c. corda quæ possidet, nec errare patitur, nec corrumpi, nec vinci quos docuerit, quos possederit, quos gladio potentissimæ veritatis accinxerit. Cyprian. de Spirit. Sanct.

promise; for although the Holy Ghost was bestowed on them in a peculiar manner, and for especial ends, yet the promise in general belongs unto all believers unto the end of the world<sup>i</sup>. For as to what concerns his gracious operations, whatever the Lord Christ prayed for for them, and so promised unto them (as the Spirit was procured for them on his prayer, John xvii. 16, 17.), he ‘prayed not for it, for them alone, but for them also which should believe on him through their word;’ John xvii. 20. And his promise is, to be ‘with his always even unto the end of the world;’ Matt. xxviii. 20. As also, that ‘wherever two or three are gathered together in his name, there he would be in the midst of them;’ Matt. xvii. 20. which he is no otherwise but by his Spirit: for as for his human nature, ‘the heavens must receive him until the times of the restitution of all things;’ Acts iii. 21. And this one consideration is sufficient to evince the importance of the doctrine, and things which concern the Holy Spirit. For is it possible that any Christian should be so supinely negligent and careless, so unconcerned in the things whereon his present comforts and future happiness do absolutely depend, as not to think it his duty to inquire with the greatest care and diligence, into what our Lord Jesus Christ hath left unto us to supply his absence, and at length to bring us unto himself? He by whom these things are despised, hath neither part nor lot in Christ himself. ‘For if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;’ Rom. viii. 9.

2. The great work of the Holy Ghost in the dispensation and ministration of the gospel unto all the ends of it, is another evidence unto the same purpose<sup>k</sup>. Hence the gospel itself is called the ‘ministration of the Spirit,’ in opposition to that of the law, which is called the ‘ministration

<sup>i</sup> *Præsentia spirituali cum eis erat ubique futurus post ascensionem suam, et cum tota ecclesia sua in hoc mundo usque in consummationem seculi:—neque enim de solis apostolis potest intelligi, sicut dedisti ei potestatem omnis carnis, ut omne quod dedisti ei det eis vitam æternam; sed ubique de omnibus quibus in eum credentibus vita æterna datur. August. Tractat. 106. in Evangel. Johan.*

Munus hoc quod in Christo est, in consummationem seculi nobiscum; hoc expectationis nostræ solatium, hoc in donorum operationibus futuræ spei pignus est; hoc moralium lumen, hic splendor animarum est. Hilar. lib. 2. de Trinitat.

<sup>k</sup> Hic est qui prophetas in ecclesia constituit, magistros erudit, linguas dirigit, virtutes et sanctitates facit, opera mirabilia gerit, discretiones spirituum porrigit, gubernationes contribuit, consilia suggerit, quæque alia sunt charismatum dona componit et digerit; et ideo ecclesiam Domino undique et in omnibus consummatam et perfectam facit. Tertul.

of the letter and of condemnation;’ 2 Cor. iii. 8. *Διακονία τοῦ πνεύματος*, the “ministry of the Spirit,” is either that ministry which the Spirit makes effectual; or that ministry whereby the Spirit in his gifts and graces is communicated unto men. And this is that which gives unto the ministry of the gospel both its glory and its efficacy. Take away the Spirit from the gospel and you render it a dead letter, and leave the New Testament of no more use unto Christians than the Old Testament is of unto the Jews. It is therefore a mischievous imagination, proceeding from ignorance, blindness, and unbelief, that there is no more in the gospel, but what is contained under any other doctrine or declaration of truth; that it is nothing but a book for men to exercise their reason in and upon, and to improve the things of it by the same faculty. For this is to separate the Spirit, or the dispensation of the Spirit, from it, which is in truth to destroy it. And therewith is the covenant of God rejected, which is, that ‘his word and Spirit shall go together;’ Isa. lix. 20, 21. We shall therefore, God assisting, manifest in our progress, that the whole ministry of the gospel, the whole use and efficacy of it, do depend on that ministration of the Spirit wherewith, according to the promise of God, it is accompanied. If therefore we have any concernment in, or have ever received any benefit by, the gospel or the ministration of it, we have a signal duty lying before us in the matter in hand.

3. There is not any spiritual or saving good from first to last communicated unto us, or that we are from and by the grace of God made partakers of, but it is revealed to us and bestowed on us by the Holy Ghost. He who hath not an immediate and especial work of the Spirit of God upon him and towards him, did never receive any especial love, grace, or mercy, from God. For how should he do so? Whatever God works in us and upon us, he doth it by his Spirit. He therefore who hath no work of the Spirit of God upon his heart, did never receive either mercy or grace from God: for God giveth them not but by his Spirit. A disclaimer therefore of any work of the Spirit of God in us or upon us, is a disclaimer of all interest in his grace and mercy. And they may do well to consider it, with whom the work of the Spirit of God is a reproach. When they can tell us of any other way whereby a man may be made partaker of mercy

and grace, we will attend unto it; in the mean time we shall prove from the Scripture this to be the way of God.

4. There is not any thing done in us or by us that is holy and acceptable unto God, but it is an effect of the Holy Spirit, it is of his operation in us and by us. 'Without him we can do nothing.' For without Christ we cannot; John xv. 5. And by him alone is the grace of Christ communicated unto us and wrought in us. By him we are regenerated<sup>1</sup>; by him we are sanctified; by him we are cleansed; by him are we assisted in and unto every good work. Particular instances to this purpose will be afterward insisted on, and proved. And it is our unquestionable concernment to inquire into the cause and spring of all that is good in us, wherein also we shall have a true discovery of the spring and cause of all that is evil; without a competent knowledge of both which, we can do nothing as we ought.

5. God lets us know that the only peculiarly remediless sin and way of sinning under the gospel, is to sin in an especial manner against the Holy Ghost. And this of itself is sufficient to convince us how needful it is for us to be well instructed in what concerns him. For there is somewhat that doth so, which is accompanied with irrecoverable and eternal ruin. And so is nothing else in the world. So Mark iii. 28, 29. 'All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme; but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness.' Or, 'he that speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come;' Matt. xii. 32. There remains nothing for him who doth despite to the Spirit of grace, but a 'certain fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation, that shall devour the adversaries;' Heb. x. 27, 29. This is that 'sin unto death,' whose remission is not to be prayed for; 1 John v. 16. For he having taken upon him to make effectual unto us the great remedy provided in the blood of Christ for the pardon of our sins, if he in the prosecution of that

<sup>1</sup> Hic est qui operatur ex aquis, secundam nativitatem, semen quoddam divini generis, et consecrator cælestis nativitatis; pignus promissæ hæreditatis et quasi chi-rographum quoddam æternæ salutis; qui nos Dei faciat templum et nos efficiat domum, qui interpellat divinas aures pro nobis gemitibus ineloquacibus, advocacionis officia, et defensionis exhibens munera, inhabitator corporibus nostris ductus, et sanctitatis effector; hic est qui inexplebiles cupiditates coeracet, &c. Novat. de Trinitat.

work be despised, blasphemed, despitefully used, there neither is relief, nor can there be pardon for that sin. For whence in that case should they arise or spring? as God hath not another Son to offer another sacrifice for sin, so that he by whom his sacrifice is despised can have none remaining for him; no more hath he another Spirit to make that sacrifice effectual unto us, if the Holy Ghost in his work be despised and rejected. This therefore is a tender place<sup>m</sup>. We cannot use too much holy diligence in our inquiries after what God hath revealed in his word concerning his Spirit and his work; seeing there may be so fatal a miscarriage in an opposition unto him, as the nature of man is incapable of in any other instance.

And these considerations belong unto the first head of reasons of the importance, use, and necessity, of the doctrine proposed to be inquired into. They are enough to manifest what is the concernment of all believers herein. For on the account of these things the Scripture plainly declares, as we observed before, ‘that he who hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of his;’ their portion is not in him, they shall have no benefit by his mediation. Men may please themselves with a profession of being Christians and owning the gospel, whilst they despise the Spirit of God both name and thing. Their condition we shall examine and judge by the Scripture before we come to the end of this discourse. And for the Scripture itself, whoever reads the books of the New Testament, besides the great and precious promises that are given concerning him in the Old, will find and conclude, unless he be prepossessed with prejudice, that the whole of what is declared in those writings, turns on this only hinge. Remove from them the consideration of the Spirit of God and his work, and it will be hard to find out what they aim at or tend unto.

Secondly, The great *deceit* and *abuse* that hath been in all ages of the church under the pretence of the *name* and

<sup>m</sup> Omnibus quidem quæ divina sunt cum reverentiâ et vehementi cura oportet intendere, maxime autem his quæ de Spiritu Sancti divinitate dicuntur, præsertim cum blasphemia in eum sine venia sit; ita ut blasphemantis pœna tendatur non solum in omne præsens seculum, sed etiam in futurum. Ait quippe salvator, blasphemanti in Spiritum Sanctum non esse remissionem, neque in isto seculo neque in futuro: unde magis ac magis intendere oportet quæ Scripturarum de eo sit relatio ne in aliquem, saltem per ignorantiam, blasphemiam error obrepat. Didym. de Spir. Sanct. lib. 1. Interpret. Hieron.

*work of the Spirit*, make the thorough consideration of what we are taught concerning them, exceeding necessary. Had not these things been excellent in themselves, and so acknowledged by all Christians, they would never have been by so many falsely pretended unto. Men do not seek to adorn themselves with rags, or to boast of what on its own account is under just contempt. And according to the worth of things so are they liable to abuse. And the more excellent any thing is, the more vile and pernicious is an undue pretence unto it. Such have been the false pretences of some in all ages unto the Spirit of God and his work, whose real excellences in themselves, have made those pretences abominable and unspeakably dangerous. For the better the things are which are counterfeited, the worse always are the ends they are employed unto. In the whole world there is nothing so vile as that which pretendeth to be God, and is not; nor is any other thing capable of so pernicious an abuse. Some instances hereof I shall give both out of the Old Testament and the New.

The most signal gift of the Spirit of God for the use of the church under the Old Testament, was that of prophecy. This therefore was deservedly in honour and reputation; as having a great impression of the authority of God upon it, and in it of his nearness unto man. Besides, those in whom it was, had justly the conduct of the minds and consciences of others given up unto them. For they spake in the name of God, and had his warranty for what they proposed, which is the highest security of obedience. And these things caused many to pretend unto this gift, who were indeed never inspired by the Holy Spirit, but were rather on the contrary acted by a spirit of lying and uncleanness. For it is very probable, that when men falsely and in mere pretence took upon them to be prophets divinely inspired, without any antecedent diabolical enthusiasm, that the devil made use of them to compass his own designs. Being given up by the righteous judgment of God unto all delusions, for belying his Spirit and holy inspirations, they were quickly possessed with a spirit of lying and unclean divination. So the false prophets of Ahab, who encouraged him to go up unto Ramoth Gilead, foretelling his prosperous success, 1 Kings xxii. 6. seemed only to have complied deceitfully with the

inclinations of their master, and to have out-acted his other courtiers in flattery, by gilding it with a pretence of prophecy. But when Micaiah came to lay open the mystery of their iniquity, it appeared that a lying spirit by the permission of God had possessed their minds, and gave them impressions, which being supernatural, they were deceived as well as they did deceive, ver. 21—23. This they were justly given up unto, pretending falsely unto the inspiration of that Holy Spirit, which they had not received. And no otherwise hath it fallen out with some in our days, whom we have seen visibly acted by an extraordinary power; unduly pretending unto supernatural agitations from God, they were really acted by the devil, a thing they neither desired nor looked after; but being surprised by it were pleased with it for a while; as it was with sundry of the Quakers at their first appearance.

Now these false prophets of old were of two sorts, both mentioned, Deut. xviii. 20. *First*, Such as professedly served other gods, directing all their prophetic actings unto the promotion of their worship. Such were the prophets of Baal, in whose name expressly they prophesied, and whose assistance they invocated: 'They called on the name of Baal, saying, O Baal hear us;' 1 Kings xviii. 26—28. Many of these were slain by Elijah, and the whole race of them afterward extirpated by Jehu; 2 Kings x. 25—28. This put an end to his deity, for it is said, 'he destroyed Baal out of Israel;' false gods having no existence but in the deceived minds of their worshippers. It may be asked why these are called prophets? and so in general of all the false prophets mentioned in the Scripture. Was it because they merely pretended and counterfeited a spirit of prophecy, or had they really any such? I answer, that I no way doubt, but that they were of both sorts. These prophets of Baal were such as worshipped the sun, after the manner of the Tyrians. Herein they invented many hellish mysteries, ceremonies, and sacrifices; these they taught the people, by whom they were hired. Being thus engaged in the service of the devil, he actually possessed their minds 'as a spirit of divination,' and enabled them to declare things unknown unto other men. They in the mean time really finding themselves acted by a power superior to them, took and owned that to be the

power of their god; and thereby became immediate worshippers of the devil. This our apostle declares, 1 Cor. x. 20. Whatever those who left the true God aimed at to worship, the devil interposed himself between that and them as the object of their adoration. Hereby he became the 'god of this world;' 2 Cor. iv. 4. Him whom in all their idols they worshipped and adored. With a spirit of divination from him were many of the false prophets acted, which they thought to be the spirit of their god. For they found themselves acted by a superior power, which they could neither excuse nor resist<sup>n</sup>. Others of them were mere pretenders and counterfeits, that deceived the foolish multitude with vain false predictions. Of these more will be spoken afterward.

*Secondly*, Others there were, who spake in the name, and as they falsely professed, by the inspiration, of the Spirit of the Holy God. With this sort of men Jeremiah had great contests. For in that apostatizing age of the church, they had got such an interest and reputation among the rulers and people, as not only to confront his prophecies with contrary predictions, chap. xxviii. 2—4. but also to traduce him as a false prophet, and to urge his punishment according to the law, chap. xxix. 25—27. And with the like confidence did Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah carry it towards Micaiah, 1 Kings xxii. 26. for he scornfully asks him, 'Which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me to speak unto thee;' that is, whereas assuredly he speaketh in me, how came he to inspire thee with a contrary revelation? Ezekiel, at the same time with Jeremiah, was exercised and perplexed with them, chap. xiii. and xiv. For this sort of persons, namely, false pretenders unto divine extraordinary revelations, did of old usually abound in times of danger and approaching desolations. The devil stirred them up to fill men with vain hopes, to keep them in sin and security, that destruction might seize upon them at unawares. And whoever takes the same course in the time of deserved threatened impendent judgments, though they use not the

<sup>n</sup> Ἐπειδὴν γὰρ τελεταῖς τισὶ καὶ μαγανείαις κατέδρασε δαίμονά τις εἰς ἄνθρωπον, καὶ ἔμαντεύετο ἐκεῖνος, καὶ μαντεύμενος ἔρρησάτετο, καὶ ἐσπαράττετο, καὶ ἐνεργεῖν τοῦ δαίμονος τὴν ὄρμην οὐκ ἠδύνατο ἀλλ' ἔμελλε διασπώμενος οὕτως ἀπόλλυσθαι, ταῖς τὰ τοιαῦτοις τὰ μαγανεούσι φησὶ

Λύσατε λοιπὸν ἄνακτα βροτῶς Θεὸν οὐκ ἔτι Χωρεῖ. Chrysost. in 1 Cor. xii.

same means, yet they also do the work of the devil. For whatever encourageth men to be secure in their sins, is a false divination; Jer. v. 30, 31. And this sort of men is characterized by the prophet Jeremiah, chap. xxiii. from ver. 9, to 33. where any one may read their sin and judgment. And yet this false pretending unto the spirit of prophecy, was very far from casting any contempt on the real gift of the Holy Ghost therein; nay, it gave it the greater glory and lustre. God never more honoured his true prophets, than when there were most false ones. Neither shall ever any false pretence to the Spirit of grace render him less dear unto those that are partakers of him, or his gifts of less use unto the church.

It was thus also under the New Testament at the first preaching of the gospel. The doctrine of it at first was declared from the immediate revelation of the Spirit; preached by the assistance of the Spirit; made effectual by his work and power; was accompanied in many by outward miraculous works and effects of the Spirit; whence the whole of what peculiarly belonged unto it in opposition to the law, was called the 'ministration of the Spirit.' These things being owned and acknowledged by all, those who had any false opinions or dotages of their own to broach, or any other deceit to put upon Christians, could think of no more expedite means for the compassing of their ends, than by pretending to immediate revelations of the Spirit. For without some kind of credibility given them from hence, they knew that their fond imaginations would not be taken into the least consideration. Hence the apostle Peter, having treated concerning the revelation of God by his Spirit in prophecy under the Old Testament and the New, 2 Epist. chap. i. 17—21. adds as an inference from that discourse, a comparison between the false prophets that were under the Old Testament, and the false teachers under the New; chap. ii. 1. 'But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you.' And the reason of it is, because that as they pretended to the Spirit of the Lord in their prophecies, saying, 'Thus saith the Lord,' when he sent them not; so these ascribed all their abominable heresies to the inspiration of the Spirit, by whom they were not assisted.

Hence is that blessed caution and rule given us by the apostle John, who lived to see much mischief done in the church by this pretence; 1 Epist. chap. iv. 1, 2. ‘Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know we the Spirit of God; every spirit that confesseth that Jesus is come in the flesh, is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God.’ A two-fold direction doth the apostle here give unto all believers. The first by the way of caution, that they would not believe every spirit; that is, not receive or give credit to every doctrine that was proposed unto them as of immediate revelation and inspiration of the Spirit. He intends the same with the apostle Paul; Eph. iv. 14. who would not have us carried about with every wind of doctrine, like vessels at sea without anchor or helms, by the ‘sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive.’ For the craft and sleights intended, are such as men use when they cast a mist, as it were, before the eyes of others whom they intend to cheat and defraud. So dealt false teachers with their disciples, by their pretences of immediate revelations. His next direction informs us how we may observe this caution unto our advantage, and this is by trying the spirits themselves. This is the duty of all believers on any such pretences. They are to try these spirits, and examine whether they are of God or no. For the observation of this rule, and discharge of this duty, the church of Ephesus is commended by our Lord Jesus Christ; Rev. ii. 2. ‘Thou hast tried them, which say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars.’ For those who said they were apostles, pretended therewithal to apostolical authority and infallibility, on the account of the immediate inspirations which they received by the Holy Ghost. In trying them, they tried the spirits that came unto them. And by this warrant may we try the spirit of the church of Rome, which in like manner pretends unto apostolical authority and infallibility.

Unto these two directions, the apostle subjoins the reason of the present watchfulness required unto the discharge of this duty. ‘For,’ saith he, ‘many false prophets are gone out into the world.’ It is false teachers, as Peter calls them,

‘bringing in damnable heresies,’ concerning whom he speaks. And he calleth them false prophets, partly in an allusion unto the false prophets under the Old Testament, with whom they are ranked and compared by Peter; and partly, because as they fathered their prejudices on divine revelation, so these falsely ascribed their doctrines unto immediate divine inspiration. And on this account also he calleth them spirits; ‘try the spirits.’ For as they pretended unto the Spirit of God, so indeed for the most part they were acted by a spirit of error, lying, and delusion; that is, the devil himself. And therefore I no way doubt, but that mostly those who made use of this plea, that they had their doctrines which they taught by immediate inspiration, did also effect other extraordinary operations or undiscoverable appearances of them, as lying miracles, by the power of that spirit whereby they were acted; as Matt. xxiv. 24. Hence the apostle doth not direct us to try their pretensions unto inspiration, by putting them on other extraordinary works for their confirmation; for these also they made a show and appearance of, and that in such a manner as that they were not to be detected by the generality of Christians; but he gives unto all a blessed stable rule, which will never fail them in this case who diligently attend unto it. And this is to try them by the doctrine that they teach; ver. 2, 3. Let their doctrine be examined by the Scriptures, and if it be found consonant thereunto, it may be received without danger unto the hearers, whatever corrupt affections the teachers may be influenced by. But if it be not consonant thereunto, if it keep not up a harmony in the analogy of faith, whatever inspiration or revelation be pleaded in its justification, it is to be rejected, as they also are by whom it is declared. This rule the apostle Paul confirms by the highest instance imaginable; Gal. i. 8. ‘If we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.’ And the apostle shews, that, for our advantage in this trial we are to make of spirits, it is good to have a clear conviction of, and a constant adherence unto, some fundamental principles, especially such as we have reason to think will be the most cunningly attacked by seducers. Thus, because in those days the principal design of Satan was to broach strange false imaginations about the person and mediation

of Christ, endeavouring thereby to overthrow both the one and the other; the apostle adviseth believers to try the spirits by this one fundamental principle of truth, namely, that 'Jesus Christ is come in the flesh;' which contains a confession both of his person and mediation. This, therefore, believers were to demand of all new teachers and pretenders unto spiritual revelations in the first place; do you confess that 'Jesus Christ is come in the flesh;' and if they immediately made not this confession, they never stood to consider their other pretences, but turned from them not bidding them God-speed; 2 John vii. 10, 11. And I could easily manifest how many pernicious heresies were obviated in those days by this short confession of faith. For some of late (as Grotius following Socinus and Sclictingius) interpreting this coming of Christ in the flesh, of his outward mean estate and condition, and not in the pomp and glory of an earthly king, do openly corrupt the text. His coming in the flesh, is the same with the 'Word's being made flesh;' John i. 14. or, 'God being manifest in the flesh;' 1 Tim. iii. 16. that is, the Son of God being made 'partaker of flesh and blood;' Heb. ii. 14. or 'taking on him the seed of Abraham;' ver. 14. that is, his being 'made of a woman;' Gal. iv. 4. or his being 'made of the seed of David according to the flesh;' Rom. i. 3. His 'being of the fathers as to the flesh;' Rom. ix. 5. And this was directly opposed unto those heresies which were then risen, whose broachers contended that Jesus Christ was but a phantasy, an appearance, a manifestation, of divine love and power; denying that the Son of God was really incarnate, as the ancients generally testify. And well had it been for many in our days had they attended unto such rules as this. But through a neglect of it, accompanied with an ungrounded boldness and curiosity, they have hearkened in other things to deceiving spirits, and have been engaged beyond a recovery, before they have considered that by their coggling deceits they have been cheated of all the principal articles of their faith; by which, if at first they had steadily tried and examined them, they might have been preserved from their snares.

The Jews say well, that there was a double trial of prophets under the Old Testament; the one by their doctrine, the other by their predictions. That by their doctrine,

namely, whether they seduced men from the worship of the true God unto idolatry, belonged unto all individual persons of the church. Direction for this is given, Deut. xiii. 2, 3. 'If the prophet giveth a sign or a wonder, and it come to pass (effect any thing by a seeming presence of an extraordinary power), and say, Let us go serve other gods, thou shalt not hearken unto him.' Let his signs and wonders be what they would the people were to try them by what they taught. The judgment upon predictions was left unto the Sanhedrim; for which directions are given, Deut. xviii. 20—22. And by virtue hereof they falsely and cruelly endeavoured to take away the life of Jeremiah, because he foretold the ruin of them and their city; chap. xxvi. 11. In the first place, though his sign, wonder, or prediction, came to pass, yet the doctrine he sought to confirm by it being false, he was to be rejected. In the latter, the fulfilling of his sign acquitted him, because he taught with it nothing in point of doctrine that was false. The first kind of trial of the spirits of prophets is the duty of all believers under the gospel. And those who would deprive them of this liberty would make brutes of them instead of Christians; unless to believe a man knows not what, and to obey he knows not why, be the properties of Christians; see Rom. xii. 2. Ephes. v. 8—11. Phil. i. 10. 1 Thess. v. 21. The other, so far as was needful to preserve the church in truth and peace, was provided for in those primitive times, whilst there was a real communication of extraordinary gifts of the Spirit (and so more occasion given to the false pretence of them, and more danger in being deceived by them), by a peculiar gift of discerning them bestowed on some amongst them; 1 Cor. xii. 10. 'Discerning of spirits' is reckoned among the gifts of the Spirit. So had the Lord graciously provided for his churches, that some among them should be enabled in an extraordinary manner, to discern and judge of them who pretended unto extraordinary actings of the Spirit. And upon the ceasing of extraordinary gifts really given from God, the gift also of discerning spirits ceased, and we are left unto the word alone for the trial of any that shall pretend unto them. Now this kind of pretence was so common in those days, that the apostle Paul writing to the Thessalonians, to caution them that they suffered not themselves to be deceived

in their expectation and computations about the time of the coming of Christ, in the first place warns them not to be moved in it 'by spirit;' 2 Thess. ii. 2. That is, persons pretending unto spiritual revelations. Something also of this nature hath continued and broken out in succeeding ages, and that in instances abominable and dreadful. And the more eminent in any season are the real effusions of the Holy Spirit upon the ministers of the gospel, and disciples of Christ, the more diligence and watchfulness against these delusions are necessary. For on such opportunities it is, when the use and reputation of spiritual gifts is eminent, that Satan doth lay hold to intrude under the colour of them his own deceitful suggestions. In the dark times of the papacy all stories are full of Satanical delusions, in phantastical apparitions, horrors, spectrums, and the like effects of darkness. It was seldom or never that any falsely pretended to the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit; for these things were then of little use or request in the world. But when God was pleased to renew really a fresh communication of spiritual gifts and graces unto men in and upon the reformation, the old dreads and terrors, nightly appearances tending unto deeds of darkness vanished, and every where by Satan's instigation arose false pretenders to the Spirit of God; in which way of delusion he will still be more active and industrious, as God shall increase the gifts and graces of his Spirit in his churches; though as yet in these latter ages he hath not attained what he was arrived unto in the primitive times of the gospel. A full and clear declaration from the Scripture of the nature of the Holy Spirit and his operations, may, through the blessing of God, be of use to fortify the minds of professors against Satanical delusions counterfeiting his actings and inspirations. For directions unto this purpose are given us by the holy apostle, who lived to see great havoc made in the churches by deluding spirits. Knowledge of the truth, trying of spirits that go abroad by the doctrines of the Scriptures, dependence on the Holy Spirit for his teachings according to the word, are the things which to this purpose he commends unto us.

Thirdly, There is in the days wherein we live, an *anti-spirit*, set up and advanced against the Spirit of God, in his *being* and all his *operations*, in his whole work and use

towards the church of God. For this new spirit, takes upon him whatever is promised to be effected by the 'good Spirit of God.' This is that which some men call the light within them, though indeed it be nothing but a dark product of Satan upon their own imaginations; or at best the natural light of conscience, which some of the heathens also call a spirit<sup>n</sup>. But hereunto do they trust as that which doth all for them, leaving no room for the 'promise of the Spirit of God,' nor any thing for him to do. This teacheth them, instructs them, enlightens them; to this they attend as the Samaritans to Simon Magus, and, as they say, yield obedience unto it. And from hence, with the fruits of it, do they expect acceptation with God, justification and blessedness hereafter. And one of these two things these deluded souls must fix upon; namely, that this light whereof they speak, is either the Holy Spirit of God, or it is not. If they say it is the Spirit, it will be easy to demonstrate how by their so saying they utterly destroy the very nature and being of the Holy Ghost, as will evidently appear in our explication of them. And if they say, that it is not the Holy Spirit of God which they intend thereby, it will be no less manifest that they utterly exclude him on the other side from his whole work, and substitute another, yea, an enemy, in his room. For another God is a false god; another Christ is a false Christ; and another Spirit is a false spirit, the spirit of antichrist. Now, because this is a growing evil amongst us, many being led away and seduced, our duty unto Jesus Christ, and compassion for the souls of men, do require that our utmost endeavour, in the ways of Christ's appointment, should be used to obviate this evil which eateth as doth a canker; which also is propagated by profane and vain babblings, increasing still unto more ungodliness. Some I confess do unduly rage against the persons of those who have imbibed these imaginations, falling upon them with violence and fury, as they do also on others; the Lord lay it not unto their charge. Yet this hinders not but that by those 'weapons of our warfare which are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down such like imaginations, and every high thing

<sup>n</sup> Ita dico Lucili; sacer inter nos spiritus sedet, bonorum malorumque nostrorum observator et custos; prout a nobis tractatus est, ita ipse nos tractat. Senece. Epist. 41.

that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought unto the obedience of Christ,' we ought to attempt the destruction of their errors, and the breaking of the snares of Satan by whom they are taken captive alive at his pleasure. The course indeed of opposing errors and false spirits by praying, preaching, and writing, is despised by them in whose furious and haughty minds, *ure, seca, occide*; 'burn, cut, and kill,' are alone of any signification; that think, 'arise, Peter, kill and eat,' to be a precept of more use and advantage unto them than all the commands of Jesus Christ besides. But the way proposed unto us by the Lord Jesus Christ himself, walked in by his holy apostles, and all the ancient, holy, learned writers of the church, is that which in these matters we must and shall attend unto. And that course which is particularly suited to obviate the evil mentioned, is to give a full plain evident declaration from the Scripture of the nature and operations of the Holy Spirit of God. Hence it will be undeniably manifest what a stranger this pretended light is unto the true Spirit of Christ; how far it is from being of any real use to the souls of men; yea, how it is set up in opposition unto him and his work, by whom, and by which alone, we become accepted with God, and are brought unto the enjoyment of him.

Fourthly, There are moreover many hurtful and noxious *opinions* concerning the Holy Ghost gone abroad in the world, and entertained by many to the subversion of the faith which they have professed°. Such are those whereby his *Deity* and *Personality* are denied. About these there have been many contests in the world: some endeavouring with diligence and subtilty to promote the perverse opinions mentioned; others contending, according to their duty, 'for the faith once delivered unto the saints.' But these disputations are for the most part so managed, that although the truth be in some of them strenuously vindicated, yet the minds of believers generally are but little edified by them. For the

° Quoniam quidam temeritate potius quam recta via etiam in superna eriguntur, et hæc de Spiritu Sancto jactitant, quæ neque in Scripturis lecta, nec a quoquam ecclesiasticorum veterum usurpata sunt, compulsi sumus celeberrimæ exhortatione fratrum cedere, quæque sit nostra de eo opinio etiam Scripturarum testimoniis comprobare; ne imperitia tanti dogmatis, hi qui contraria opponunt decipiant eos qui sine discussione sollicita in adversariorum sententiam statim pertrahuntur. Didym. de Spirit. Sauc. lib. i.

most are unacquainted with the ways and terms of arguing, which are suited to convince or 'stop the mouths of gain-sayers,' rather than to direct the faith of others. Besides, our knowledge of things is more by their operations and proper effects, than from their own nature and formal reason. Especially is it so in divine things, and particularly with respect unto God himself. In his own glorious being, he dwelleth in light whereunto no creature can approach. In the revelation that he hath made of himself by the effects of his will in his word and works are we to seek after him. By them are the otherwise invisible things of God made known, his attributes declared; and we come to a better acquaintance with him, than any we can attain by our most diligent speculations about his nature itself immediately. So is it with the Holy Ghost and his personality. He is in the Scripture<sup>p</sup> proposed unto us to be known by his properties and works, adjuncts and operations; by our duty towards him, and our offences against him. The due consideration of these things, is that which will lead us into that assured knowledge of his being and subsistence, which is necessary for the guidance of our faith and obedience, which is the end of all these inquiries; Col. ii. 2. Wherefore, although I shall by the way explain, confirm, and vindicate the testimonies that are given in the Scripture, or some of them, unto his deity and personality; yet the principal means that I shall insist on for the establishing of our faith in him, is the due and just exposition and declaration of the administrations and operations that are ascribed unto him in the Scriptures; which also will give great light into the whole mystery and economy of God in the work of our salvation by Jesus Christ.

Fifthly, The principal cause and occasion of our present undertaking, is the open and horrible *opposition* that is made unto the Spirit of God, and his work in the world. There is no concernment of his that is not by many derided, exploded, and blasphemed. The very name of the Spirit is grown to be a reproach; nor do some think they can more despitefully expose any to scorn, than by ascribing to them

<sup>p</sup> Appellatio Spiritus Sancti, et ea quæ monstratur ex ipsa appellatione substantia, penitus ab his ignoratur, qui extra sacram Scripturam philosophantur: solummodo eum in nostratibus literis et notio ejus et vocabulum refertur tam in nobis quam in veteribus. Didym. de Spirit. Sanc. lib. i.

a 'concern in the Spirit of God.' This indeed is a thing which I have often wondered at, and do continue still so to do. For whereas in the gospel every thing that is good, holy, praiseworthy, in any man, is expressly assigned to the Spirit, as the immediate efficient cause and operator of it, and whereas the condition of men without him, not made partakers of him, is described to be reprobate or rejected of God, and foreign unto any interest in Christ; yet many pretending unto the belief and profession of the gospel, are so far from owning or desiring a participation of this Spirit in their own persons, as that they deride and contemn them who dare plead or avow any concern in him or his works. Only I must grant that herein they have had some that have gone before them; namely, the old scoffing heathens. For so doth Lucian in his *Philopatris* speak in imitation of a Christian by way of scorn, λέγε, Παρὰ τοῦ πνεύματος δύναμιν τοῦ λόγου λαβών, 'Speak out now, receiving power or ability of speaking from the Spirit, or by the Spirit.' Certainly an attendance to the old caution, *si non caste tamen caute*, had been needful for some in this matter. Could they not bring their own hearts unto a due reverence of the Spirit of God, and an endeavour after a participation of his fruits and effects, yet the things that are spoken concerning him and his work in the whole New Testament, and also in places almost innumerable in the Old, might have put a check to their public contemptuous reproaches and scornful mockings, whilst they own those writings to be of God. But such was his entertainment in the world upon his first effusion; Acts ii. 13. Many pretences I know will be pleaded to give countenance unto this abomination. For first, they will say, It is not the Spirit of God himself and his works, but the pretence of others unto him and them, which they so reproach and scorn. I fear this plea or excuse, will prove too short and narrow, to make a covering unto their profaneness. It is dangerous venturing with rudeness and petulancy upon holy things, and then framing of excuses. But in reproaches of the Lord Christ and his Spirit, men will not want their pretences; John x. 32. And the things of the Spirit of God, which they thus reproach and scorn in any, are either such as are truly and really ascribed unto him and wrought by him in the disciples of Jesus Christ, or they are

not: if they are such as indeed are no effects of the Spirit of grace, such as he is not promised for, nor attested to work in them that do believe, as vain enthusiasms, ecstatical raptures and revelations, certainly it more became Christians, men professing, or at least pretending, a reverence unto God, his Spirit, and his word, to manifest and convince those of whom they treat, that such things are not 'fruits of the Spirit,' but imaginations of their own, than to deride them under the name of the Spirit, or his gifts and operations. Do men consider with whom and what they make bold in these things? But if they be things that are real effects of the Spirit of Christ in them that believe, or such as are undeniably assigned unto him in the Scripture, which they despise; what remains to give countenance unto this daring profaneness? Yea, but they say, secondly, It is not the real true operations of the Spirit themselves, but the false pretensions of others unto them which they traduce and expose. But will this warrant the course which it is manifest they steer in matter and manner? The same persons pretend to believe in Christ and the gospel, and to be made partakers of the benefits of his mediation. And yet if they have not the 'Spirit of Christ,' they have no saving interest in these things; for if 'any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.' If it be then only their false pretending unto the Spirit of God and his works which these persons so revile and scorn, why do they not deal with them in like manner with respect unto Christ and the profession of the gospel? Why do they not say unto them, 'You believe in Christ, you believe in the gospel;' and thereon expose them to derision? So plainly dealt the Jews with our Lord Jesus Christ; Psal. xxii. 7, 8. Matt. xxi. 39. 43. It is therefore the things themselves, and not the pretences pretended, that are the objects of this contempt and reproach. Besides, suppose those whom at present on other occasions they hate or despise, are not partakers of the Spirit of God, but are really strangers unto the things which hypocritically they profess? Will they grant and allow that any other Christians in the world do so really partake of him, as to be led, guided, directed by him; to be quickened, sanctified, purified by him; to be enabled unto communion with God, and all duties of holy obedience by him; with those other effects and opera-

tions for which he is promised by Jesus Christ unto his disciples? If they will grant these things to be really effected and accomplished in any, let them not be offended with them who desire that they should be so in themselves, and declare themselves to that purpose; and men would have more charity for them under their petulant scoffing, than otherwise they are able to exercise. It will, thirdly, yet be pleaded, That they grant as fully as any the being of the Holy Ghost, the promise of him and his real operations, only they differ from others as to the sense and exposition of those phrases and expressions that are used concerning these things in the Scripture, which those others abuse in an unintelligible manner, as making them proper which indeed are metaphorical. But is this the way which they like and choose to express their notions and apprehensions? namely, openly to revile and scorn the very naming and asserting the work of the Spirit of God, in the words which himself hath taught? A boldness this is which as whereof the former ages have not given us a precedent, so we hope the future will not afford an instance of any to follow the example. For their sense and apprehension of these things they shall afterward be examined, so far as they have dared to discover them. In the mean time we know that the Socinians acknowledge a Trinity, the sacrifice of Christ, the expiation of sin made thereby; and yet we have some differences with them about these things. And so we have with these men about the Spirit of God and his dispensation under the gospel; though like them, they would grant the things spoken of them to be true, as metaphorically to be interpreted. But of these things we must treat more fully hereafter.

I say, it is so come to pass amongst many who profess they believe the gospel to be true, that the name or naming of the Spirit of God is become a reproach. So also is his whole work. And the promise of him made by Jesus Christ unto his church, is rendered useless and frustrated. It was the main, and upon the matter the only, supportment which he left unto it in his bodily absence, the only means of rendering the work of his mediation effectual in them and among them. For without him, all others, as the word, ministry, and ordinances of worship, are lifeless and useless. God is not glorified by them, nor the souls of men advantaged. But

it is now uncertain with some of what use he is unto the church; yea, as far as I can discern, whether he be of any or no. Some have not trembled to say and contend, that some things as plainly ascribed unto him in the Scripture, as words can make an assignation of any thing, are the cause of all the troubles and confusions in the world. Let them have the word or tradition outwardly revealing the will of God, and what it is that he would have them do (as the Jews have both to this day), these being made use of by their own reason, and improved by their natural abilities, they make up the whole of man, all that is required to render the persons or duties of any accepted with God. Of what use then is the Spirit of God in these things? Of none at all it may be, nor the doctrine concerning him, but only to fill the world with a buzz and noise, and to trouble the minds of men with unintelligible notions. Had not these things been spoken, they should not have been repeated, for death lieth at the door in them. So then men may pray without him, and preach without him, and turn to God without him, and perform all their duties without him well enough. For if any one shall plead the necessity of his assistance for the due performance of these things, and ascribe unto him all that is good and well done in them, he shall hardly escape from being notably derided. Yet all this while we would be esteemed Christians. And what do such<sup>a</sup> persons think of the prayers of the ancient church and Christians unto him for the working of all good in them, and their ascriptions of every good thing unto him? And wherein have we any advantage of the Jews, or wherein consists the pre-eminence of the gospel? They have the word of God, that part of it which was committed unto their church, and which in its kind is sufficient to direct their faith and obedience; for so is the 'sure word of prophecy' if diligently attended unto; 2 Pet. i. 19. And if traditions be of any use, they can outvie all the world. Neither doth this

<sup>a</sup> Adesto Sancte Spiritus, et paraclesin tuam expectantibus illabere cœlitus, sanctifica templum corporis nostri et consecra in habitaculum tuum; desiderantes te animas tua præsentiâ lætifica, dignam te habitatore domum compone; adorna thalamum tuum, et quietis tuæ reclinatorium, circumda varietatibus virtutum; sterne pavimenta pigmentis; niteat mansio tua carbunculis flammis, et gemmarum splendoribus; et omnium Chrismatum intrinsecus spirent odoramenta; affatim balsami liquor flagrantia sua cubiculum suum imbuat; et abigens inde quicquid tædium est, quicquid corruptelæ seminariæ; stabile et perpetuum hoc facias gaudium nostrum, et creationis tuæ renovationem in decore inmarcescibili solidas in æternum. Cyprian, de Sp. Sa.

sort of men want their wits, and the exercise of them. Those who converse with them in the things of this world, do not use to say they are all fools. And for their diligence in the consideration of the letter of the Scripture, and inquiring into it according to the best of their understanding, none will question it, but those unto whom they and their concerns are unknown. And yet after all this, they are Jews still. If we have the New Testament, no otherwise than they have the Old, have only the letter of it to philosophize upon, according to the best of our reasons and understandings, without any dispensation of the Spirit of God accompanying it to give us a saving light into the mystery of it, and to make it effectual unto our souls; I shall not fear to say, but that as 'they call themselves Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan,' Rev. ii. 9. so we who pretend ourselves to be Christians, as to all the saving ends of the gospel, shall not be found in a better condition.

And yet it were to be wished that even here bounds might be fixed unto the fierceness of some men's spirits. But they will not suffer themselves to be so confined. In many places they are transported with rage and fury, so as to stir up persecution against such as are really anointed with the Spirit of Christ, and that for no other reason but because they are so; Gal. iv. 29. Other things indeed are pretended by them, but all the world may see that they are not of such importance as to give countenance unto their wrath. This is the latent cause which stirs it up, and is oftentimes openly expressed.

These things at present are charged only as the miscarriages of *private persons*. When they are received in churches, they are the cause of, and an entrance into, a *fatal defection* and apostacy. From the foundation of the world the principal revelation that God made of himself, was in the oneness of his nature, and his monarchy over all. And herein the person of the Father was immediately represented with his power and authority. For he is the fountain and original of the Deity, the other persons as to their subsistence being of him. Only he did withal give out promises concerning the peculiar exhibition of the Son in the flesh in an appointed season, as also of the Holy Spirit to be given by him in an especial manner. Hereby were their persons to be signally

glorified in this world; it being the will of God that all 'men should honour the Son, as they honoured the Father;' and the Holy Spirit in like manner. In this state of things, the only apostacy of the church could be polytheism and idolatry. Accordingly, so it came to pass: the church of Israel was continually prone to these abominations; so that scarcely a generation passed, or very few, wherein the body of the people did not more or less defile themselves with them. To wean and recover them from this sin was the principal end of the preaching of those prophets which God from time to time sent unto them; 2 Kings xvii. 13. And this also was the cause of all the calamities which befel them, and of all the judgments which God inflicted on them, as is testified in all the historical books of the Old Testament, and confirmed by instances innumerable. To put an end hereunto God at length brought a total desolation upon the whole church, and caused the people to be carried into captivity out of their own land. And hereby it was so far effected, that upon their return whatever other sins they fell into, yet they kept themselves from idols and idolatry; Ezek. xvi. 62, 63. xxiii. 27. 48. And the reason hereof was, because the time was now drawing nigh wherein they were to be tried with another dispensation of God. The Son of God was to be sent unto them in the flesh. To receive and obey him was now to be the principal instance and trial of their faith and obedience. They were no longer to be tried merely by their faith, whether they would own only the God of Israel, in opposition unto all false gods and idols; for that ground God had now absolutely won upon them; but now all is to turn on this hinge, whether they would receive the Son of God coming in the flesh, according to the promise; here the generality of that church and people fell by their unbelief, apostatized from God, and became thereby neither church nor people; John viii. 24. They being rejected, the Son of God calls and gathers another church, founding it on his own person with faith and the profession of it therein; Matt. xvi. 18, 19. In this new church therefore this foundation is fixed, and this ground made good, that Jesus Christ the Son of God is to be owned and honoured as we honour the Father; 1 Cor. iii. 11. And herein all that are duly called Christians do agree; as the church of Israel did in one

God after their return from the captivity of Babylon; but now the Lord Jesus Christ being ascended unto his Father, hath committed his whole affairs in the church and in the world unto the Holy Spirit; John xvi. 7—11. And it is on this design of God, that the person of the Spirit may be singularly exalted in the church, unto whom they were so in the dark before that some, none of the worst of them, professed they had not so much as heard whether there were any Holy Ghost or no; Acts xix. 2. that is, at least, as unto the peculiar dispensation of him then introduced in the church. Wherefore the duty of the church now immediately respects the Spirit of God, who acts towards it in the name of the Father and of the Son. And with respect unto him it is, that the church in its present state is capable of an apostacy from God; and whatever is found of this nature amongst any here it hath its beginning. For the sin of despising his person and rejecting his work now, is of the same nature with idolatry of old, and the Jews' rejection of the person of the Son. And whereas there was a relief provided against these sins, because there was a new dispensation of the grace of God to ensue in the evangelical work of the Holy Ghost; if men sin against him and his operations, containing the perfection and complement of God's revelation of himself unto them, their condition is deplorable.

It may be some will say and plead, that whatever is spoken of the Holy Ghost, his graces, gifts, and operations, did entirely belong unto the first times of the gospel wherein they were manifested by *visible and wonderful effects*. To those times they were confined, and consequently that we have no other interest or concern in them but as in a *recorded testimony* given of old unto the truth of the gospel. This is so indeed as unto his extraordinary and miraculous operations. But to confine his whole work thereunto, is plainly to deny the truth of the promises of Christ, and to overthrow his church. For we shall make it undeniably evident that none can believe in Jesus Christ, or yield obedience unto him, or worship God in him, but by the Holy Ghost. And therefore if the whole dispensation of him and his communications unto the souls of men do cease, so doth all faith in Christ, and Christianity also.

On these and the like considerations it is that I have

thought it necessary for myself, and unto the church of God, that the Scripture should be diligently searched in and concerning this great matter. For none can deny but that the glory of God, the honour of the gospel, the faith and obedience of the church, with the everlasting welfare of our own souls, are deeply concerned herein.

The apostle Peter, treating about the great things of the gospel taught by himself and the rest of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, tells those to whom he wrote, that in what was so preached unto them, they had not 'followed cunningly devised fables;' 2 Pet. i. 16. For so were the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ then reported to be in the world. What was preached concerning them was looked on as 'cunningly devised,' and artificially framed 'fables,' to inveigle and allure the people. This the apostle gives his testimony against, and withal appeals unto the divine assurance which they had of the holy truths delivered unto them; ver. 17—20. In like manner our Lord Jesus Christ himself having preached the doctrine of regeneration unto Nicodemus, he calls it into question as a thing incredible, or unintelligible; John iii. 4. For whose instruction and the rebuke of his ignorance he lets him know that he spake nothing but what he brought with him from heaven, from the eternal fountain of goodness and truth; ver. 11—13. It is fallen out not much otherwise in this matter.

The doctrine concerning the Spirit of God, and his work on the souls of men, hath been preached in the world. What he doth in convincing men of sin; what in working godly sorrow and humiliation in them; what is the exceeding greatness of his power, which he puts forth in the regeneration and sanctification of the souls of men; what are the supplies of grace which he bestows on them that do believe; what assistance he gives unto them as the Spirit of grace and supplications; hath been preached, taught, and pressed on the minds of them that attend unto the dispensation of the word of the gospel. Answerable hereunto, men have been urged to try, search, examine themselves, as to what of this work of the Holy Ghost they have found, observed, or had experience to have been effectually accomplished in or upon their own souls. And hereon they have been taught, that the great concernments of their

peace, comfort, and assurance, of their communion among themselves as the saints of God, with many other ends of their holy conversation, do depend. Nay, it is, and hath been constantly, taught them, that if there be not an effectual work of the Holy Ghost upon their hearts, that they 'cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' Now these things, and whatever is spoken in the explication of them, are by some called in question, if not utterly rejected. Yea, some look on them as 'cunningly devised fables;' things, that some not long since invented, and others have propagated for their advantage. Others say, that what is delivered concerning them, is hardly, if at all, to be understood by rational men, being only empty speculations about things wherein Christian religion is little or not at all concerned. Whereas, therefore, many, very many, have received these things as sacred truths, and are persuaded that they have found them realized in their own souls, so that into their experience of the work of the Holy Spirit of God in them, and upon them, according as it is declared in the word, all their consolation and peace with God, is for the most part resolved, as that which gives them the best evidence of their interest in him who is their peace; and whereas for the present, they do believe that unless these things are so in and with them, they have no foundation to build a hope of eternal life upon; it cannot but be of indispensable necessity unto them to examine and search the Scripture diligently whether these things be so or no. For, if there be no such work of the Spirit of God upon the hearts of men, and that indispensably necessary to their salvation; if there are no such assistances and supplies of grace needful unto every good duty, as wherein they have been instructed; then in the whole course of their profession they have only been seduced 'by cunningly devised fables,' their deceived hearts have fed upon ashes, and they are yet in their sins. It is then of no less consideration and importance than the eternal welfare of their souls immediately concerned therein can render it; that they diligently try, examine, and search into these things, by the safe and infallible touchstone and rule of the word, whereon they may, must, and ought, to venture their eternal condition. I know, indeed, that most believers are so far satisfied in the truth of these things and

their own experience of them, that they will not be moved in the least by the oppositions which are made unto them, and the scorn that is cast upon them. 'For he that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself;' 1 John v. 10. But yet as Luke wrote his Gospel to Theophilus, that he might 'know the certainty of those things wherein he had been instructed;' Luke i. 4. that is, to confirm him in the truth, by an addition of new degrees of assurance unto him; so it is our duty to be so far excited by the clamorous oppositions that are made unto the truths which we profess, and in whose being such we are as much concerned as our souls are worth, to compare them diligently with the Scripture, that we may be the more fully confirmed and established in them. And upon the examination of the whole matter, I shall leave them to their option as Elijah did of old; if 'Jehovah be God, serve him, and if Baal be God, let him be worshipped.' If the things which the generality of professors do believe and acknowledge, concerning the Spirit of God and his work on their hearts, his gifts and graces in the church, with the manner of their communication, be for the substance of them, wherein they all generally agree according to the Scripture, taught and revealed therein, on the same terms as by them received; then may they abide in the holy profession of them, and rejoice in the consolations they have received by them. But if these things, with those other, which, in the application of them to the souls of men, are directly and necessarily deduced, and to be deduced from them, are all but vain and useless imaginations, it is high time the minds of men were disburdened of them.