

MARKS OF A WORK
OF THE SPIRIT OF
GOD APPLIED



JONATHAN EDWARDS

MARKS OF A WORK OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD APPLIED

Jonathan Edwards



A free edition from

CHRISTIAN READER

A reading & audiobook app for classic Christian literature

ABOUT THIS BOOK



In this seminal treatise, one of history's greatest theologians provides a **definitive guide to spiritual discernment**. Written amidst the religious fervor of the Great Awakening, the work establishes **biblical criteria** for distinguishing genuine movements of the Holy Spirit from mere emotionalism or deception. By identifying "distinguishing marks"—including a heightened esteem for Christ and a deeper love for truth—the text offers a **timeless framework** for evaluating revival. This profound analysis remains an essential resource for scholars and seekers alike, championing **authentic faith** and theological clarity in an age of religious uncertainty.



ABOUT CHRISTIAN READER



Christian Reader is a free reading and audiobook app for classic Christian literature, with high-quality narration available as a premium upgrade.

Available on iOS and Android.

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/christian-reader/id6755921023>

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.samfrisch.christian_reader

CONTENTS



Title Page	5
To the Reader	6
The Marks of a Work of the True Spirit	22

TITLE PAGE



The distinguishing marks of a work of the Spirit of God.

Applied to that uncommon operation that has lately appeared on the minds of many of the people of this land:

With a particular consideration of the extraordinary circumstances with which this work is attended.

A Discourse delivered at **New-Haven, September** tenth 1741. Being the day after the commencement; and now published at the earnest desire of many ministers and other gentlemen that heard it; with great enlargements.

By **Jonathan Edwards**, Master of Arts, Pastor of the Church of Christ at **Northampton**.

With a preface by the Reverend Mister Cooper of **Boston**.

—John 10:4-5— And the sheep follow him, for they know his voice; and a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers.

Boston: Printed and sold by S. Kneeland and T. Green, in Queen Street, over against the prison. 1741.

TO THE READER



THERE are several Dispensations, or Days of Grace, which the Church of God has been under from the beginning of Time. There is that under the ancient Patriarchs; that under the Law of Moses; and there is that of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, under which we now are. This is the brightest Day that ever shone, and exceeds the other for peculiar Advantages. To us who are so happy as to live under the Evangelical Dispensation, may those Words of our Savior be directed, which he spoke to his Disciples, when he was first setting up the Messiah's Kingdom in the World, and Gospel Light and Power began to spread abroad; Blessed are the Eyes which see the Things that you see. For I tell you, that many Prophets and Kings, have desired to see those Things which you see, and have not seen them; and to hear those Things which you hear, and have not heard them.

The Mosaic Dispensation, though darkened with Types and Figures, yet far exceeded the former: But the Gospel Dispensation so much exceeds in Glory, that it does eclipse the Glory of the Legal, as the Stars disappear when the Sun arises, and goes forth in his Strength—And the chief Thing that renders the Gospel so glorious is,

that it is the Ministration of the SPIRIT. **Under the preaching of it the Holy Spirit was to be poured out in more plentiful Measures; not only in miraculous Gifts, as in the first Times of the Gospel; but in his internal saving Operations, accompanying the outward Ministry, to produce numerous Conversions to Christ, and give spiritual Life to Souls that were before dead in Trespasses and Sins, and so prepare them for Life eternal. Thus the Apostle speaks, when he runs a Comparison between the old Testament and the new, the Law of Moses, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ; For the Letter kills, but the Spirit gives Life. But if the Ministration of Death, written and engraved in Stones was glorious, so that the Children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the Face of Moses, for the Glory of his Countenance, which Glory was to be done away; how shall not the Ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?**

This blessed Time of the Gospel, has several other Denominations, which may raise our Esteem and Value for it. It is called by the evangelical Prophet, The acceptable Year of the Lord. Or, as it may be read, the Year of Liking, or of Benevolence, or of the good Will of the Lord; because it would be the special Period in which he would display his Grace and Favor in an extraordinary Manner, and deal out spiritual Blessings with a full and liberal Hand. —It is also styled by our Savior, The Regeneration; which may refer not only to that glorious Restitution of all Things, which is looked for at the Close of the Christian

Dispensation, but to the renewing Work of Grace in particular Souls, carried on from the Beginning to the End of it.

But few were renewed and sanctified under the former Dispensations, compared with the Instances of the Grace of God in Gospel Times. Such Numbers were brought into the Gospel Church when it was first set up, as to give Occasion for that pleasing admiring Question, which was indeed a Prophecy of it, Who are these that fly as a Cloud? And as the Doves to their Windows? Then the Power of the divine Spirit so accompanied the Ministry of the Word, as that Thousands were converted under one Sermon. —But notwithstanding this large Effusion of the Spirit, when Gospel Light first dawned upon the World, and that pleasant Spring of Religion which then appeared on the Face of the Earth, there was a gradual Withdraw of his saving Light and Influences, and so the Gospel came to be less successful, and the State of Christianity withered in one Place and another.

Indeed at the Time of the Reformation from Popery, when Gospel Light broke in upon the Church, and dispelled the Clouds of Antichristian Darkness that covered it, the Power of divine Grace so accompanied the Preaching of the Word, as that it had admirable Success in the Conversion and Edification of Souls, and the blessed Fruits thereof appeared in the Hearts and Lives of its Professors. That was one of the Days of the Son of Man, on which the exalted Redeemer, rode forth in his Glory

and Majesty, on the white Horse of the pure Gospel, conquering and to conquer; **and the Bow in his Hand, like that of Jonathan's**, returned not empty.—

But what a dead and barren Time has it now been, for a great while, with all the Churches of the Reformation? The golden Showers have been restrained; the Influences of the Spirit suspended; and the Consequence has been, that the Gospel has not had any eminent Success: Conversions have been rare and dubious; few Sons and Daughters have been born to God; and the Hearts of Christians not so quickened, warmed and refreshed under the Ordinances, as they have been.

That this has been the sad State of Religion among us in this Land for many Years, (except one or two distinguished Places, who have at Times been visited with a Shower of Mercy, while other Towns and Churches have not been rained upon) will be acknowledged by all who have spiritual Senses exercised, as it has been lamented by faithful Ministers, and serious Christians. Accordingly it has been a constant Petition in our public Prayers from Sabbath to Sabbath, "That God would pour out his Spirit upon us, and revive his Work in the midst of the Years." And besides our annual Fast-Days appointed by the Government, most of our Churches have set apart Days, wherein to seek the Lord by Prayer and Fasting, that he would come and rain down Righteousness upon us.

And now,—Behold! The Lord whom we have sought, has suddenly come to his Temple. The Dispensation of Grace we are now under, is certainly such as neither we nor our

Fathers have seen; and in some Circumstances so wonderful, that I believe there has not been the like since the extraordinary pouring out of the Spirit immediately after our Lord's Ascension. The Apostolical Times seem to have returned upon us: Such a Display has there been of the Power and Grace of the divine Spirit in the Assemblies of his People, and such Testimonies has he given to the Word of the Gospel.—

I remember a remarkable Passage of the late Reverend and Learned Mister How, which I think it may be worth while to transcribe here. It is in his Discourse concerning the prosperous State of the Christian Church before the End of Time, by a plentiful Effusion of the Holy Spirit, Page 80. In such a Time, **says he**, when the Spirit shall be poured forth plentifully, sure Ministers shall have their proportionable Share. And when such a Time as that shall come, I believe you will hear much other Kind of Sermons, (or they will who shall live to such a Time) than you are used to do nowadays: Souls will surely be dealt withal at another Kind of Rate. It is plain, **says He**, too sadly plain, There is a great Retraction of the Spirit of God even from Us: We know not how to speak living Sense into Souls; how to get within you: Our Words die in our Mouths, or drop and die between you and us. We even faint when we speak; long experienced Unsuccessfulness makes us despond: We speak not as Persons that hope to prevail, that expect to make you serious, heavenly, mindful of God, and to walk more like Christians. The Methods of alluring and convincing Souls, even that some of us have known, are lost from amongst us in a great Part. There have been other Ways taken, than we can tell now how to fall upon, for the mollifying of

the Obdurate, and the awakening of the Secure, and the convincing and persuading of the Obstinate, and the winning of the Disaffected. Sure there will be a large Share, that will come even to the Part of Ministers, when such an Effusion of the Spirit shall be, as is expected: That they shall know how to speak to better Purpose, with more Compassion, with more Seriousness, with more Authority and Allurement, than we now find we can. Thus He.

Agreeable to the just Expectation of this great and excellent Man, we have found it in this remarkable Day. A Number of Preachers have appeared among us, to whom God has given such a large Measure of his Spirit, that we are ready sometimes to apply to them the Character given of Barnabas, That he was a good Man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of Faith. They preach the Gospel of the Grace of God from Place to Place, with uncommon Zeal and Assiduity. —The Doctrines they insist on, are the Doctrines of the Reformation, under the Influence whereof the Power of Godliness so flourished in the last Century. The Points on which their Preaching mainly turns, are those important ones, of Man's Guilt, Corruption, and Impotence; Super-natural Regeneration by the Spirit of God, and free Justification by Faith in the Righteousness of Christ; and the Marks of the new Birth. —The Manner of their preaching is not with the enticing Words of Man's Wisdom: Howbeit, they speak Wisdom among them that are perfect. An ardent Love to Christ and Souls, warms their Breasts, and animates their Labors. God has made these his Ministers active Spirits, a Flame of Fire in his Service: And his Word in

their Mouths has been as a Fire; and as a Hammer that breaks the Rock in Pieces. In most Places where they have labored, God has evidently wrought with them, and confirmed the Word by Signs following. Such a Power and Presence of God in religious Assemblies, has not been known since God set up his Sanctuary amongst us: He has indeed glorified the House of his Glory.

This Work is truly extraordinary in Respect of the Extent of it. It is more or less in the several Provinces that measure many hundred Miles on this Continent. He sends forth his Commandment upon Earth; his Word runs very swiftly. It has entered and spread in some of the most populous Towns, the chief Places of Concourse and Business. And,—Blessed be God!—It has visited the Seats of Learning, both here, and in a neighboring Colony. O may the Holy Spirit constantly reside in them both, seize our devoted Youth, and form them as polished Shafts successfully to fight the Lord's Battles against the Powers of Darkness, when they shall be called out to Service!

It is extraordinary also with Respect to the Numbers that have been the Subjects of this Operation. Stupid Sinners have been awakened by Hundreds; And the Inquiry has been general in some Places, What must I do to be saved? I verily believe in this our Metropolis, there were the last Winter some Thousands under such religious Impressions as they never felt before.

The work has been remarkable also for the various sorts of persons that have been under the influence of it. —These have been of all ages. Some elderly persons have been

snatched as brands out of the burning, made monuments of divine mercy, and born to God, though out of due time; as the Apostle speaks in his own case. But here with us it has lain mostly amongst the young. Sprightly youth have been made to bow like willows to the Redeemer's Scepter, and willingly to subscribe with their own hands to the Lord. And out of the mouths of babes, some little children, has God ordained to himself praise, to still the enemy and the avenger. —Of all ranks and degrees. Some of the great and rich; but more of the low and poor— Of other countries and nations. Ethiopia has stretched out her hand: Some poor Negroes have, I trust, been vindicated into the glorious liberty of the children of God. —Of all qualities and conditions. The most ignorant; the foolish things of the world, babes in knowledge have been made wise unto salvation, and taught those heavenly truths, which have been hid from the wise and prudent. Some of the learned and knowing among men, have had those things revealed to them of the Father in heaven, which flesh and blood do not teach: And of these, some who had gone into the modern notions, and had no other than the polite religion of the present times, have had their prejudices conquered, their carnal reasonings overcome, and their understandings made to bow to Gospel mysteries; they now receive the truth as it is in Jesus, and their faith no longer stands in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God. Some of the most rude and disorderly, are become regular in their behavior, and sober in all things. The gay and airy, are become grave and serious. Some of the greatest sinners

have appeared to be turned into real saints. Drunkards have become temperate: **Fornicators** and **adulterers** of a chaste conversation; **swearers**, and **profane persons**, have learned to fear that glorious and fearful name, the Lord their God; and **carnal worldlings** have been made to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Yea, **deriders** and **scoffers** at this work and the instruments of it, have come under its conquering power. Some of this stamp, who have gone to hear the preacher, as some did **Paul**; **What will this babbler say?** Have not been able to resist the power and the spirit with which he spake; have sat trembling under the word, and gone away from it weeping; and afterward did cleave unto the preacher, as **Dionysius the Areopagite** did unto **Paul**. Diverse instances of this kind, have fallen under my knowledge. —The **virtuous** and **civil** have been convinced that morality is not to be relied on for life; and so excited to seek after the new birth, and a vital union to Jesus Christ by faith. The **formal professor** likewise has been awakened out of his dead formalities, and brought under the power of godliness; taken off from his false rests, and brought to build his hopes only on the Mediator's righteousness. At the same time many of the **children of God** have been greatly quickened and refreshed; have been awakened out of the sleepy frames they were fallen into, and excited to give diligence to make their calling and election sure; and have had precious reviving and sealing times. —Thus **extensive** and **general** the divine influence has been, at this glorious season.**

One thing more is worthy remark; and this is the uniformity of the work. By the accounts I have received in letters, and conversation with ministers and others who live

in different parts of the land where this work is going on, it is the same work that is carried on in one place and another: The method of the Spirit's operation on the minds of people is the same; though with some variety of circumstances as is usual at other times: And the particular appearances with which this work is attended, that have not been so common at other times, are also much the same. These are indeed objected by many against the work: But though conversion is the same work, in the main strokes of it, wherever it is wrought; yet it seems reasonable to suppose that at an extraordinary season wherein God is pleased to carry on a work of his grace in a more observable and glorious manner, in a way which he would have to be taken notice of by the world; at such a time, I say, it seems reasonable to suppose, there may be some particular appearances in the work of conversion, which are not common at other times, when yet there are true conversions wrought; or some circumstances attending the work may be carried to an unusual degree and height. If it were not thus, the work of the Lord would not be so much regarded and spoken of; and so God would not have so much, of the glory of it: nor would the work itself be like to spread so fast; for God has evidently made use of example and discourse in the carrying of it on.

And as to the fruits of this work, (which we have been bid so often to wait for) Blessed be God! So far as there has been time for observation they appear to be abiding. I don't mean, that none have lost their impressions, or that there are no instances of hypocrisy and apostasy.

Scripture and experience lead us to expect these at such a season. It is to me matter of surprise and thankfulness that as yet there have been no more. But I mean, that a great number of those who have been awakened are still seeking and striving to enter in at the strait gate. The most of those who have been thought to be converted, continue to give evidences of their being new creatures, and seem to cleave to the Lord with full purpose of heart. To be sure a new face of things continues in this town; though many circumstances concur to render such a work not so observable here, as in smaller and distant places. Many things not becoming the profession of the Gospel are in a measure reformed. Taverns, dancing-schools, and such meetings as have been called assemblies, which have always proved unfriendly to serious godliness, are much less frequented. Many have reduced their dress and apparel, so as to make them look more like the followers of the humble Jesus. And it has been both surprising and pleasant to see how some younger people, and of that sex too which is most fond of such vanities, have put off the bravery of their ornaments, as the effect and indication of their seeking the inward glories of the King's daughter. Religion is now much more the subject of conversation at friends' houses, than ever I knew it. The doctrines of grace are espoused and relished. Private religious meetings are greatly multiplied. —The public assemblies (especially lectures) are much better attended: And our audi-

tories were never so attentive and serious. There is indeed an extraordinary appetite after the sincere milk of the word.

It is more than a twelve month since an evening lecture was set up in this town; there are now several; two constantly on Tuesday and Friday evenings; when some of our most capacious houses are well filled, with hearers who by their looks and deportment seem to come to hear that their souls might live. An evening in God's courts is now esteemed better than many elsewhere. There is also great resort to ministers in private. Our hands continue full of work: And many times we have more than we can discourse with distinctly and separately—.

I have been thus large and particular, that persons at a distance, who are desirous to know the present state of religion here, into whose hands these papers will come, may receive some satisfaction.—

And now, can any be at a loss to what spirit to ascribe this work? To attribute it, as some do, to the Devil, is to make the old serpent, like the foolish woman, who plucketh down her house with her hands. Our Savior has taught us to argue otherwise in such a case as this: Every kingdom divided against itself, is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself, shall not stand. And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself: How then shall his kingdom stand?

That some entertain prejudices against this work, and others revile and reproach it, does not make it look less like a work of God: It would else want one mark of its being so; for the spirit of this world, and the spirit which is of God, are contrary the one to the other. I don't wonder that Satan rages, and shows his rage in some that are under his influence, when his kingdom is so shaken, and his subjects desert him by hundreds, I hope by thousands.

The prejudices of some, I make no doubt, are owing to the want of opportunity to be rightly informed, and their having received misrepresentations from abroad. Others may be offended because they have not experienced any thing like such a work in themselves; and if these things be so, they must begin again, and get another foundation laid than that on which they have built: And this is what men are hardly brought to. And others, perhaps, may dislike the present work, because it supports and confirms some principles which they have not yet embraced, and against which such prejudices hang about their minds, as they cannot easily shake off: For 'tis certain these fruits do not grow on Arminian ground. I hope none dislike the work because they have not been used as instruments in it: For if we love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, we shall rejoice to see Him increase, though we should decrease.

If any are resolutely set to disbelieve this work, to reproach and oppose it, they must be left to the free sovereign power and mercy of God to enlighten and rescue them. These, if they have had opportunity to be rightly informed, I am ready to think, would have been unbeliev-

ers, and opposers of the miracles and mission of our Savior, had they lived in his days. The malignity which some of them have discovered, to me approaches near to the unpardonable sin; and they had need beware lest they indeed sin the sin which is unto death: For as I believe it can be committed in these days as well as in the days of the Apostles, so I think persons are now in more danger of committing it than at other times. [I hope these words have dropped from my pen not in an intemperate zeal, but with due caution, and some suitable solemnity of spirit] **At least let them come under the awe of that word, Psalm 28:5.** Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.

But if any are disposed to receive conviction, have a mind open to light, and are really willing to know of the present work whether it be of God, **it is with great satisfaction and pleasure I can recommend to them the following sheets; in which they will find the distinguishing marks of such a work, as they are to be found in the Holy Scriptures, applied to the uncommon operation that has been on the minds of many in this land. Here the matter is tried by the infallible touchstone of the holy Scriptures, and is weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, with great judgment and impartiality.**

A Performance of this Kind is seasonable and necessary; and I desire heartily to bless God who inclined this his Servant to undertake it, and has graciously assisted him in it. The Reverend Author is known to be a Scribe instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven; the Place where he has

been called to exercise his Ministry has been famous for experimental Religion; and he has had Opportunities to observe this Work in many Places where it has powerfully appeared, and to converse with Numbers that have been the Subjects of it. These Things qualify him for this Undertaking above most. His Arguments in favour of the Work, are strongly drawn from Scripture, Reason, and Experience: And I believe every candid judicious Reader will say, he writes very free from an Enthusiastic or a Party Spirit. The Use of human Learning is asserted; a methodical Way of Preaching, the Fruit of Study as well as Prayer, is recommended; and the Exercise of Charity in judging Others pressed and urged: And those Things which are esteemed the Blemishes, and are like to be the Hindrances of the Work, are with great Faithfulness cautioned and warned against. —Many I believe will be thankful for this Publication. Those who have already entertained favourable Thoughts of this Work, will be confirmed by it; and the Doubting may be convinced and satisfied. But if there are any who cannot after all see the Signatures of a Divine Hand on the Work, it is to be hoped they will be prevailed on to spare their Censures, and stop their Oppositions, lest** perhaps they should be found even to fight against God—

I had yet several Things to say, which I see I must suppress, or I shall go much beyond the Limits of a Preface: And I fear I need to ask Pardon, both of the Reader and the Publishers, for the Length I have run already. Only I cannot help expressing my Wish, that those who have been conversant in this Work, in one Place and another, would transmit Accounts

of it to such a Hand as the Reverend Author of **this** Discourse, to be compiled into a **Narrative**, like that of the Conversions at **Northampton** which was published a few Years ago: that so the World may know this surprising Dispensation, in the Beginning, Progress, and various Circumstances of it. This, I apprehend, would be for the Honour of the **HOLY SPIRIT**, whose Work and Office has been treated so reproachfully in the Christian World: It would be an open Attestation to the Divinity of a despised Gospel: And it might have a happy Effect on other Places, where the Sound of this marvellous Work would by this Means be heard. I cannot but think it would be one of the most useful Pieces of **Church History** the People of God are blessed with. Perhaps it would come the nearest to the **Acts of the Apostles** of any Thing extant; and all the Histories in the World do not come up to **that: There** we have something as surprising, as in the Book of **Genesis**; and a new Creation, of another Kind, seems to open to our View.— —But I must forbear.—**

I will only add my Prayer, That the worthy Author of this Discourse, may long be continued a burning and shining Light in the Golden Candlestick where CHRIST has placed him; and from thence diffuse his Light through these Provinces! That the divine SPIRIT, whose Cause is here espoused, would accompany this, and the other valuable Publications of his Servant, with his powerful Influences; that they may promote the REDEEMER'S Interest, serve the Ends of vital Religion, and so add to the Author's present Joy, and future Crown!

Boston, November 20, 1741. William Cooper.

THE MARKS OF A WORK OF THE TRUE SPIRIT



1 John 4:1. **Beloved, believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits whether they are of God; because many — false Prophets are gone out into the World.**

The apostolical Age, or the Age in which the Apostles lived and preached the Gospel, was an Age of the greatest outpouring of the Spirit of God that ever was; and that both as to the extraordinary Influences and Gifts of the Spirit, in Inspiration and Miracles, and also as to his ordinary Operations, in convincing, converting, enlightening and sanctifying the Souls of Men. But as the Influences of the true Spirit abounded, so Counterfeits did also then abound: The Devil was abundant in mimicking, both the ordinary and extraordinary Influences of the Spirit of God, as is manifest by innumerable Passages of the Apostles Writings. This made it very necessary that the Church of Christ should be furnished with some certain Rules, and distinguishing and clear Marks by which she might proceed safely in judging of Spirits, and distinguish the true from the false, without Danger of being imposed upon. The giving such Rules is the plain Design of this Chapter, where we have this Matter more expressly and fully treated of than anywhere else in

the Bible. The Apostle here, of set Purpose, undertakes to supply the Church of God with such Marks of the true Spirit as may be plain, and safe, and surely distinguishing, and well accommodated to Use and Practice; and that the Subject might be clearly and sufficiently handled, he insists upon it throughout the Chapter: Which makes it wonderful that what is said in this Chapter, is no more taken notice of in this extraordinary Day, when that which is so remarkable appears; such an uncommon Operation on the Minds of People, that is so extensive; and there is such a Variety of Opinions concerning it, and so much Talk about the Work of the Spirit.

The Apostle is led to discourse on this Subject by an occasional Mention of the indwelling of the Spirit, as the sure Evidence of an Interest in Christ, in the last Verse of the foregoing Chapter. **And he that keeps his commandments dwells in him, and he in him; and hereby we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit which he has given us.** Whence we may infer, That the Design of the Apostle in this Chapter is not only to give Marks whereby to distinguish the true Spirit from false in his extraordinary Gifts of Prophecy and Miracles, but also in his ordinary Influences on the Minds of his People, in order to their Union to Christ, and being built up in him; which is also manifest from the Marks themselves that are given, which we shall hereafter take Notice of.

The Words of the Text are an Introduction to this Discourse, of the distinguishing Signs of the true and false Spirit. Before the Apostle proceeds to lay down these Signs, he exhorts the Christians he writes to, to Care in this Matter. And, first, here is the Duty of trying the Spirits urged, with a Caution annexed,

against an over Credulousness, and a Forwardness to admit every Thing as the Mark of a true Spirit that has that Show or Pretext; **Beloved, believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits, whether they are of God.** Second, the Necessity of this Duty is shown from this, That there were many Counterfeits: **because many false Prophets are gone out into the World.** The false Apostles, and false Prophets, that were in those Days, did not only pretend to have the Spirit of God in his extraordinary Gifts of Inspiration, but also to be the great Friends and Servants of Heaven, and to be eminently holy Persons, and so to have much of the ordinary, saving, sanctifying Influences of the Spirit of God on their Hearts; and we are to look upon these Words as a Direction to examine and try their Pretences to the Spirit of God, in both these Respects.

After the Apostle had thus counseled and warned the Christians he wrote to, with Respect to the Trial of Spirits, he immediately proceeds to give them Rules, by which they may safely proceed in judging of every Thing that had the Pretext of being either the ordinary or extraordinary Work of the Spirit of God.

My Design therefore at this Time is to show what are the true, certain, and distinguishing Evidences of a Work of the Spirit of God, by which we may proceed safely in judging of any Operation we find in ourselves, or see in others.

And here I would observe that we are to take the Scriptures as our Guide in such Cases: This is the great and standing Rule which God has given to his Church, to guide them in all Things relating to the great Concerns of their Souls; and it is an infallible and sufficient Rule. There are undoubtedly sufficient Marks given to guide the Church of God in this great Affair of judging of Spirits, without

which it would lie open to woeful Delusion, and would be remedilessly exposed to be imposed on and devoured by its Enemies: And what Rules soever we may find in the holy Scriptures to this end, we need not be afraid to trust to. Doubtless that Spirit that indited the Scriptures knew how to give us good Rules, by which to distinguish his Operations from all that is falsely pretended to be from him.

This, as I observed before, the Spirit of God has done of set purpose, in the Chapter wherein is the Text; and done it more particularly and fully than anywhere else: so that in my present Discourse, I shall go nowhere else for Rules or Marks for the Trial of Spirits, but shall confine myself to those that I find here.

But before I proceed particularly to speak to these, I would prepare my Way by first observing negatively, in some Instances, What are not Signs that we are to judge of a Work by, whether it be the Work of the Spirit of God or no; and especially, what are no Evidences that a Work that is wrought amongst a People, is not the Work of the Spirit of God.

First, nothing can certainly be concluded from this, **That the Work that appears is carried on in a Way very unusual and extraordinary.** It is no Sign that a Work is not the Work of the Spirit of God, that it is carried on in such a Way as the same Spirit of God heretofore has not been accustomed to carry on his Work, provided the Variety or Difference be such, as may still be comprehended within the Limits of those Rules which the Scriptures have given to distinguish a Work of the Spirit of God by. What we have been used to, or what the Church of God has been used to, is not a Rule by which we are to judge whether a Work be the Work of God, because there may be new and extraordinary

Works of God. God has heretofore wrought in an extraordinary Manner; he has brought those Things to pass that have been new Things, strange Works; and has wrought in such a Manner as to surprise both Men and Angels: And as God has done thus in Times past, so we have no Reason to think but that he will do so still. The Prophecies of Scripture give us Reason to think that God has still new Things to accomplish, and Things to bring to pass that have never yet been seen. No Deviation from what has hitherto been usual, let it be never so great, is an Argument that a Work is not the Work of the Spirit of God, if it be no Deviation from the Rule that God has given, to judge of a Work of his Spirit by. The Spirit of God is sovereign in his Operations; and we know that he uses a great Variety; and we cannot tell how great a Variety he may use, within the Compass of the Rules he himself has fixed. We ought not to limit God where he has not limited himself. If a Work be never so different from the Work of God's Spirit that has formerly been, yet if it only agrees in those Things that the Word of God has given us as the distinguishing Signs of a Work of his Spirit, that is sufficient to determine us entirely in its Favour.

Therefore it is not reasonable to determine that a Work is not the Work of God's Spirit, because of the extraordinary Degree in which the Minds of Persons are influenced and wrought upon. If they seem to have an extraordinary Conviction of the dreadful nature of Sin, and a very uncommon Sense of the Misery of a Christless Condition, or seem to have extraordinary Views of the certainty and glory of divine Things; and consequent on these Apprehensions, are proportionably moved with very extraordinary Affections of Fear and Sorrow, Desire, Love or Joy: Or if the Change that seems to be made in Persons, the Alteration in their

Affections and Frames, be very sudden, and the Work that is wrought on People's Minds seems to be carried on with very unusual Swiftmess, and the Persons that are thus strangely affected are very many, and many of them are very young; and also be very unusual in many other Circumstances, not infringing upon Scripture Marks of a Work of the Spirit; these Things are no Argument that the Work is not a Work of the Spirit of God.

The extraordinary and unusual Degree of Influence, and Power of Operation, if in its Nature it be agreeable to the Rules and Marks given in the Scripture, is rather an Argument in its Favour; for by how much the higher Degree that is in, which is in its Nature agreeable to the Rule, so much the more is there of Conformity to the Rule, and so much the more evident and manifest is that Conformity. When Things are in small Degrees, though they be really agreeable to the Rule, yet the Nature of them is more difficultly discerned, and it is not so easily seen whether it agrees with the Rule or no.

There is a great Aptness in Persons to doubt of Things that are Strange; especially it is difficult for elderly Persons, those that have lived a great while in the World, to think that to be right which they have been never used to in their Day, and have not heard of in the Days of their Fathers. But if it be a good Argument that a Work is not from the Spirit of God, that it is very unusual, then it always was so, and was so in the Apostles' Days. The Work of the Spirit of God that was wrought then, was carried on in a Manner that, in very many Respects, was altogether new: There were such Things then that the Jews, then living, nor their Fathers, had never seen nor heard, yea such as never had been since the World stood: The Work was then carried on with more visible and remarkable Power

than ever had been before; never were there seen before such mighty and wonderful Effects of the Spirit of God, in such sudden Changes, and such great Engagedness and Zeal in such Multitudes; such a great and sudden Alteration in Towns, Cities and Countries; such a swift Progress, and vast Extent of the Work; and many other extraordinary Circumstances might be mentioned. The great Unusualness of the Work surprised the Jews; they knew not what to make of it, but could not believe it to be the Work of God; many looked upon the Persons that were the Subjects of it as bereft of Reason; as you may see in **Acts 2:13 and 26:24 and 1 Corinthians 4:10.**

And we have Reason from Scripture Prophecy to suppose, That at the Commencement of that last and greatest Outpouring of the Spirit of God, that is to be in the latter Ages of the World, the Manner of the Work will be very extraordinary, and such as never has yet been seen; so that there shall be Occasion then to say, as in Isaiah 66:8. **Who has heard such a Thing? Who has seen such Things? Shall the Earth be made to bring forth in one Day? Shall a Nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her Children.** It may be reasonably expected that the extraordinary Manner of the Work then, will bear some Proportion to the very extraordinary Events, and that glorious Change in the State of the World, God will be about to bring to pass by it.

2. A Work is not to be judged of by any **Effects on the Bodies of Men;** such as Tears, Trembling, Groans, loud Outcries, Agonies of Body, or the failing of bodily Strength. The Influence the Minds of Persons are under, is not to be judged of one Way or the other, whether it be from the Spirit of God or no, by such

Effects on the Body; and the Reason is, Because the Scripture nowhere gives us any such Rule. We cannot conclude that Persons are under the Influence of the true Spirit, because we see such Effects upon their Bodies, because this is not given as a Mark of the true Spirit: nor on the other Hand, ... any Reason to conclude, from any ... Appearances, that Persons ... that does, either expressly or ... Body; nor does Reason exclude them. It is easily accounted for from the Consideration of the Nature of divine and eternal Things, and the Nature of Man, and the Laws of the Union between Soul and Body, how a right Influence, a true and proper Sense of Things, should have such Effects on the Body, even those that are of the most extraordinary Kind; such as taking away the bodily Strength, or throwing the Body into great Agonies, and extorting loud Outcries. There are none of us but what suppose, and would have been ready at any Time to say it, That the Misery of Hell is doubtless so dreadful, and Eternity so vast, that if a Person should have a clear Apprehension of that Misery as it is, it would be more than his feeble Frame could bear; and especially, if at the same Time he saw himself in great Danger of it, and to be utterly uncertain whether he should be delivered from it, yea, and to have no Security from it one Day or Hour. If we consider human Nature, we need not wonder that when Persons have a very great Sense of that which is so amazingly dreadful, and also have a great View of their own Wickedness and God's Anger, that Things seem to them to forebode speedy and immediate Destruction. We see the Nature of Man to be such, that when he is in Danger of some Calamity that is very terrible to him, and that he looks upon himself greatly exposed to, he is ready upon every Occasion to think that **now** it is coming: As when Persons Hearts are full of Fear, in

Time of War, looking upon themselves eminently exposed; they are ready to tremble at the shaking of a Leaf, and to expect the Enemy every Minute, and to say within themselves, **now** I shall be slain. If we should suppose that a Person saw himself hanging over a great Pit, full of fierce and glowing Flames, by a Thread that he knew to be very weak, and not sufficient long to bear his Weight, and knew that Multitudes had been in such Circumstances before, and that most of them had fallen and perished; and saw nothing within Reach, that he could take hold of to save him; What Distress would he be in? How ready to think that **now** the Thread was breaking—**now this Minute** he should be swallowed up in these dreadful Flames? And would not he be ready to cry out in such Circumstances? How much more those that see themselves in this Manner hanging over an infinitely more dreadful Pit, or held over it in the Hand of God, who at the same Time they see to be exceedingly provoked? No wonder they are ready to expect every Moment when this angry God will let them drop; and no Wonder they cry out of their Misery; and no Wonder that the Wrath of God when manifested but a little to the Soul, overbears human Strength.

So it may be easily accounted for, that a true Sense of the glorious Excellency of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of his wonderful dying Love, and the Exercise of a truly spiritual Love and Joy, should be such as very much to overcome the bodily Strength. We are all ready to own that no Man can see God and live; and that it is but a very small Part of that Apprehension of the Glory and Love of Christ, and Exercise of Love to him and Joy in him, which the Saints in Heaven are the Subjects of, that our present Frame can bear: Therefore it is not at all strange that God should sometimes

give his Saints such Foretastes of Heaven, as to diminish their bodily Strength. If it was not unaccountable that the Queen of **Sheba** fainted, and had her bodily Strength taken away, when she came to see the Glory of **Solomon**, much less is it unaccountable that she who is the Antitype of the Queen of **Sheba**, namely the Church, that is brought as it were from the utmost Ends of the Earth, from being an Alien and Stranger, far off, in a State of Sin and Misery, should faint when she comes to see the Glory of Christ, who is the Antitype of **Solomon**; and especially will be so in that prosperous, peaceful, glorious Kingdom, which he will set up in the World in its latter Age.

Some object against such extraordinary Appearances, that we have no Instances of them recorded in the New Testament, in the Time of the extraordinary Effusions of the Spirit that were then. If this should be allowed, I can see no Force in the Objection, if neither Reason, nor any Rule of Scripture excludes such Things; especially considering what was observed under the foregoing Particular. I do not know that we have any express mention in the New Testament of any Person's weeping, or groaning, or sighing, through Fear of Hell, or a Sense of God's Anger; but is there any Body so foolish as from hence to argue, that in whomsoever these Things appear, their Convictions are not from the Spirit of God? And the Reason why we do not argue thus is, Because these are easily accounted for, from what we know of the Nature of Man, and from what the Scriptures do inform us in general concerning the Nature of eternal Things, and the Nature of the Convictions of God's Spirit; so that there is no need that any Thing should be said in particular concerning these external, circumstantial Effects. No Body supposes that there is any need of express Scripture for every

external, accidental Manifestation of the inward Motion of the Mind: And though such Circumstances are not particularly recorded in sacred History, yet there is a great deal of Reason to think, from the general Accounts we have, that it could not be otherwise than that such Things must be in those Days. And there is also Reason to think that that great Outpouring of the Spirit that then was, was not wholly without those more extraordinary Effects on Persons Bodies. The **Jailer** in particular, seems to have been an Instance of that Nature, when he, in the utmost Distress and Amazement, came trembling, and fell down before **Paul** and **Silas**: His falling down at that Time, does not seem to be a designed putting himself into a Posture of Supplication, or humble Address to **Paul** and **Silas**, for he seems not to have said any Thing to them then; but he first **brought them out**, and then he says to them, **Sirs, what must I do to be saved?** Acts 16:29, 30. But his falling down, seems to be from the same Cause as his Trembling. The Psalmist gives an Account of his crying out aloud, and a great weakening of his Body under Convictions of Conscience, and a Sense of the Guilt of Sin, Psalm 32:3, 4. **When I kept Silence my Bones waxed old, through my roaring all the Day long; for Day and Night thy Hand was heavy upon me, my Moisture is turned into the Drought of Summer.** We may at least argue so much from it, That such an Effect of Conviction of Sin, may well in some Cases be supposed: for if we should suppose any Thing of an **Auxesis** in the Expressions made use of, yet the Psalmist would not represent what was, by that which would be absurd, and which no Degree of that Exercise of Mind he spoke of, would have any Tendency to.

We read of the Disciples, **Matthew** 14:26, that when they saw Christ coming to them in the Storm, and took him for some terrible Enemy, threatening their Destruction in that Storm, **they cried out for Fear**: Why therefore should it be thought strange, that Persons should cry out for Fear, when God appears to them as their terrible Enemy, and they see themselves in great Danger of being swallowed up in the bottomless Gulf of eternal Misery?

The Spouse once and again speaks of herself as overpowered with the Love of Christ, so as to weaken her Body, and make her ready to faint. Canticles 2:5. **Stay me with Flagons, comfort me with Apples, for I am sick of Love.** And Chapter 5:8. **I charge you, O ye Daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my Beloved, that ye tell him that I am sick of Love.** From whence we may at least argue, that such an Effect may well be supposed to arise from such a Cause in the Saints in some Cases, and that such an Effect will sometimes be seen in the Church of Christ.

It is a weak Objection, That the Impressions that Enthusiasts are under, have been wont to have a **great Effect on their Bodies**. That the **Quakers** used to tremble, is no Argument that **Saul**, afterwards **Paul**, and the **Jailer**, did not tremble from real Convictions of Conscience. Indeed all such Objections from Effects on the Body, let them be greater or less, seem to be exceeding frivolous: they that argue from hence, are going in the Dark; they know not what Ground they go upon, nor what Rule they go by. The Root and Cause of Things is to be looked at, and the Nature of the Operations and Affections that Persons **Minds** are under, are what are to be inquired into, and examined by the Rule of God's Word, and not the Motions of the Blood and animal Spirits.

3. It is no Argument that an Operation that appears on the Minds of a People, is not the Work of the Spirit of God, **That it occasions a great Ado, and a great deal of Noise about Religion.** For though true Religion be of a contrary Nature to that of the **Pharisees**, that was ostentatious, and delighted to set itself forth to the View of Men, for their Applause; yet such is human Nature, that it is morally impossible that there should be a great Concern, and strong Affection, and Engagedness of Mind amongst a People, that should be general, and what most of them agree in, and yet there be but little said or done that should be publicly observable; or that it should not cause a notable, visible, and open Commotion and Alteration amongst that People.

Surely it is no Argument that the Minds of Persons are not under the Influence of God's Spirit, that they are very much moved: for indeed spiritual and eternal Things are so great, and of such vast and infinite Concern, that there is a great Absurdity in Men's being but moderately moved and affected by them; and it is no Argument that they are not moved by the Spirit of God, that they are affected with these Things properly, and in some Measure, as they deserve, or in some Proportion to their Importance. And when was there ever any such Thing, since the World stood, as a People in general being greatly affected, in any Affair whatsoever, without Noise or Stir? The Nature of Man will not allow it.

Indeed Christ says, Luke 17:20. **The Kingdom of God comes not with Observation.** That is, it won't consist in what is outward and visible; it shall not be like the Kingdoms of earthly Kings, set up with outward Pomp, in some particular Place, which shall be especially the Royal City, and Seat of the Kingdom; as Christ explains himself in the Words next following, **Neither**

shall they say, lo here, or lo there; for behold the Kingdom of God is within you. Not that the Kingdom of God shall be set up in the World, on the Ruins of Satan's Kingdom, without a very notable, observable, great Effect; a mighty Change in the State of Things; to the Observation and Astonishment of the whole World: For such an Effect as this is even held forth in the Prophecies of Scripture, and is so by Christ himself, in this very Place, and even in his own Explanation of those forementioned Words, verse 24. **For as the Lightning, that lightens out of one Part under Heaven, shines unto the other Part under Heaven, so shall also the Son of Man be in his Day.** This is to distinguish Christ's coming to set up his Kingdom, from the coming of **false Christs**, which Christ tells us will be in a private Manner, **in the Deserts, and in the secret Chambers;** whereas this Event of sitting up the Kingdom of God, should be open and public, in the Sight of the whole World, with clear Manifestation, like Lightning that can't be hid, but glares in everyone's Eyes, and shines from one Side of Heaven to the other.

And we find that when Christ's Kingdom came, by that remarkable pouring out of the Spirit in the Apostles' Days, it occasioned a great Stir and Ado everywhere. What a mighty Opposition was there in **Jerusalem**, on Occasion of that great Effusion of the Spirit that was there? And so what a great Ado in **Samaria, Antioch, Ephesus, and Corinth**, and other Places? The Affair filled the World with Noise, and gave Occasion to some to say of the Apostles, that **they had turned the World upside down**, Acts 17:6.

4. It is no Argument that an Operation that appears on the Minds of a People, is not the Work of the Spirit of God, **That many that are the Subjects of it, have great Impressions on their Imaginations.** That Persons have many Impressions on their Imaginations, doesn't prove that they have nothing else. It is easy to be accounted for, that there should be much of this Nature amongst a People, where a great Multitude, of all Kinds of Constitutions, have their Minds engaged with intense Thought and strong Affection about those Things that are invisible; yea, it would be Strange if there should not. Such is our Nature that we can't think of Things invisible, without a Degree of Imagination. I dare appeal to any Man, of the greatest Powers of Mind, Whether or no he is able to fix his Thoughts on God or Christ, or the Things of another World, without imaginary Ideas, attending his Meditations? And the more engaged the Mind is, and the more intense the Contemplation and Affection, still the more lively and strong will the imaginary Idea ordinarily be; especially when the Contemplation and Affection of the Mind is attended with any Thing of Surprise; as when the View a Person has is very new, and takes strong hold of the Passions, either Fear or Joy; and when the Change of the State and Views of the Mind is sudden, from a contrary Extreme, as from that which was extremely dreadful, to that which is extremely ravishing and delightful: And it is no Wonder that many Persons don't distinguish between that which is imaginary, and that which is intellectual and spiritual; and that they are apt to lay too much Weight on the imaginary Part, and are most ready to speak of **that** in the Account they give of their Experiences, especially Persons of less Understanding and Capacity of Distinction.

As God has given us such a Faculty as the Imagination, and has so made us that we can't think of Things spiritual and invisible, without some Exercise of this Faculty, so it appears to me that such is our State and Nature, that this Faculty is really subservient and helpful to the other Faculties of the Mind, when a proper Use is made of it; though oftentimes when the Imagination is too strong, and the other Faculties weak, it overbears them, and much disturbs them in their Exercise. It appears to me manifest in many Instances I have been acquainted with, that God has really made Use of this Faculty to truly divine Purposes; especially in some that are more ignorant: God seems to condescend to their Circumstances, and deal with them as Babes; as of old he instructed his Church while in a State of Ignorance and Minority by Types and outward Representations. I can see nothing unreasonable in such a Supposition. Let others that have much Occasion to deal with Souls in spiritual Concerns, judge whether Experience doesn't confirm it.

It is no Argument that a Work is not the Work of the Spirit of God, that some that are the Subjects of it, have in some extraordinary Frames, been in a kind of Ecstasy, wherein they have been carried beyond themselves, and have had their Minds transported into a Train of strong and pleasing Imaginations, and kind of Visions, as though they were rapt up even to Heaven, and there saw glorious Sights. I have been acquainted with some such Instances; and I see no Manner of Need of bringing in the Help of the Devil into the Account that we give of these Things; nor yet of supposing them to be of the same Nature with the Visions of the Prophets, or Saint **Paul's** Rapture into Paradise. Human Nature, under these vehement and intense Exercises and Affections of

Mind, which some Persons are the Subjects of, is all that need be brought into the Account. If it may well be accounted for, that Persons under a true Sense of the glorious and wonderful Greatness and Excellency of divine Things, and Soul-ravishing Views of the Beauty and Love of Christ, should have the Strength of Nature overpowered, as I have already shown that it may; then I think it is not at all strange, that amongst great Numbers that are thus affected and overborne, there should be some Persons of particular Constitutions that should have their Imaginations thus affected: When it is thus, the Effect is no other than what bears a Proportion and Analogy to other Effects of the strong Exercise of their Minds. It is no Wonder that when the Thoughts are so fixed, and the Affections so strong, and the whole Soul so engaged and ravished and swallowed up, that all other Parts of the Body are so affected as to be deprived of their Strength, and the whole Frame ready to dissolve; I say, it is no Wonder that in such a Case, the Brain in particular, (especially in some Constitutions) which is a Part of the Body which we know is next and most especially affected by intense Contemplations and Exercises of Mind, should be overborne and affected, so that its Strength and Spirits should for a Season be diverted, and so taken off from Impressions made on the Organs of external Sense, and wholly employed in a Train of pleasing delightful Imaginations, such as the Frame the Mind is then in disposes it to.

Some Persons are ready to interpret such Things wrong, and to lay too much Weight on them, as though they were prophetic Visions, and to look upon what they imagine they see or hear in them as divine Revelations, and sometimes Significations from Heaven of what shall come to pass; which the Issue, in some

Instances I have known, has shown to be otherwise: But yet it appears to me that such Things are evidently sometimes, from the Spirit of God, though indirectly; that is, as that extraordinary Frame of Mind they are in, and that strong and lively Sense of divine Things that is the Occasion of them, is from his Spirit; and also as the Mind continues in its holy Frame, and retains a divine Sense of the Excellency of spiritual Things, even in its Rapture: which holy Frame and Sense is from the Spirit of God, though the Imaginations that attend it are but accidental, and therefore there is commonly something or other in them that is confused, improper and false.

5. It is no Sign that a Work that appears, and is wrought on the Minds of People, is not from the Spirit of God, **That Example is made use of as a great Means of it.** It is surely no Argument that an Effect is not from God, that Means are made use of in producing it; for we know that it is God's Manner to make use of Means in carrying on his Work in the World: and it is no more an Argument against the Divinity of an Effect, that this Means is made use of, than if it was by any other Means. It is agreeable to Scripture that Persons should be influenced by one another's good Example: The Scripture directs us to set good Examples to that End, **Matthew 5:16**, **1 Peter 3:1**, **1 Timothy 4:12**, **Titus 2:7**, and also directs us to be influenced by the good Examples that others set, and to follow them, **2 Corinthians 8:1-7**, **Hebrews 6:12**, **Philippians 3:17**, **1 Corinthians 4:16**, and **Chapter 11:1**, **2 Thessalonians 3:9**, **1 Thessalonians 1:7**. By which it appears that Example is one of God's Means; and certainly it is no Argument that a Work is not the Work of God, that God's own Means are made Use of to effect it.

And as it is a **scriptural** Way of carrying on God's Work, to carry it on by Example, so it is a **reasonable** Way. It is no Argument that Men are not influenced by Reason, that they are influenced by Example. This Way of Persons holding forth Truth to one another, has a Tendency to enlighten the Mind, and to convince Reason. None will deny but that for Persons to signify Things one to another **by Words**, may rationally be supposed to tend to enlighten each other's Minds; but the same Things may be signified **by Actions**, and signified much more fully and effectually. Words are of no Use any otherwise than as they convey our own Ideas to others; but Actions, in some Cases, may do it much more fully. There is a Language in Actions; and in some Cases, much more clear and convincing than in Words.

It is therefore no Argument against the Goodness of the Effect, that one affects and stirs up another; or that Persons are greatly affected by seeing others so; yea, though the Impression that is made upon them should be only by seeing the Tokens of great and extraordinary Affection in others in their Behaviour, taking for granted what they are affected with, without hearing them say one Word. There may be Language sufficient in such a Case in their Behaviour only, to convey their Minds to others, and to signify to them the Sense of Things they have, more than can possibly be done by Words only. If a Person should see another under some extreme bodily Torment, he might receive much clearer Ideas, and more convincing Evidence what he suffered by his Actions in his Misery, than he could do only by the Words of an unaffected indifferent Relator. In like Manner he might receive a greater Idea of any Thing that is excellent and very delightful, from the Behaviour of one that is in actual Enjoyment, or one that is sensible through

Sight and Taste, than by the dull Narration of one that is inexperienced and insensible himself. I desire that this Matter may be examined by the strictest Reason.

And there is this Argument, that Effects that are produced in Persons Minds by Example are rational, that it is manifest that not only weak and ignorant People are much influenced by it, but nothing can be more evident to any one that observes the World of Mankind, than that all sorts of Persons, wise and unwise, and even those that make the greatest Boasts of Strength of Reason, are more influenced by Reason held forth in this Way than almost any other Way.

Indeed when religious Affections are raised by this Means, it is as when Persons affected in hearing the Word preached, or any other Means, the Affections of many prove flashy, and soon vanish, as Christ represents of the stony Ground Hearers; but the Affections of some that are thus moved by Example are abiding, and prove to be of saving Issue.

There never yet was a Time of remarkable pouring out of the Spirit, and great Revival of Religion, but that Example had a main Hand; so it was in the Time of the Reformation, and so it evidently was in that great Out-pouring of the Spirit that was in the Apostles Days, in **Jerusalem**, and **Samaria**, and **Ephesus**, and other Parts of the World, as will be most manifest to any one that attends to the Accounts we have in the Acts of the Apostles: As in those Days one Person was moved by another, so one City or Town was influenced by the Example of another, 1 Thessalonians 1:7, 8. **So that ye were Examples to all that believe in Macedonia, and**

Achaia; **for from you sounded out the Word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every Place your Faith to Godward is spread abroad.**

It is no valid Objection against Examples being made so much use of, that the Scripture speaks of the Word of God as the principal Means of carrying on God's Work; for the Word of God is the principal Means nevertheless, as that is the Means by which other Means operate, and are made effectual: The Sacraments have no Effect but by the Word. And so it is that Example becomes effectual; for all that is visible to the Eye is unintelligible and vain, without the Word of God to instruct and guide the Mind: It is the Word of God that is indeed held forth and applied by Example, as the Word of the Lord sounded forth to other Towns in **Macedonia** and **Achaia**, by the Example of those that believed in **Thessalonica**.

That Example should be a great Means of propagating the Church of God seems to be several Ways signified in Scripture: It is signified by **Ruth's** following **Naomi** out of the Land of **Moab**, into the Land of **Israel**, when she resolved that she **would not leave her; but would go whether she went, and would lodge where she lodged; and that Naomi's People should be her People, and Naomi's God her God.** **Ruth** who was the Mother of **David** and of Christ, was undoubtedly a great Type of the Church; upon which Account her History is inserted in the Canon of the Scripture: In her leaving the Land of **Moab** and its Gods, to come and put her Trust under the Shadow of the Wings of the God of **Israel**, we have a Type, not only of the Conversion of the Gentile Church, but the Conversion of every Sinner, that is naturally an Alien and Stranger, but in his Conversion forgets his own

People, and Father's House, and is made nigh, and becomes a Fellow-Citizen with the Saints, and a true **Israelite**. The same seems to be signified in the Effect the Example of the Spouse, when she was **sick of Love**, has on the **Daughters of Jerusalem**, that is, visible Christians, who are represented as being first awakened by seeing the Spouse in such extraordinary Circumstances, and then converted. See **Song of Solomon** 5:8, 9 **and** 6:1. And this is undoubtedly one Way that **the Spirit and the Bride says, come**, Revelation 22:17, that is, the **Spirit** in the **Bride**. It is foretold, that the Work of God should be carried on very much by this Means, in the last great Out-pouring of the Spirit, that should introduce the glorious Day of the Church, so often spoken of in Scripture. Zechariah 8:21, 22, 23. **And the Inhabitants of one City, shall go to another, saying, let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of Hosts; I will go also. Yea many People, and strong Nations shall come to seek the Lord of Hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, in those Days it shall come to pass, that ten Men shall take hold, out of all Languages of the Nations, even shall take hold of the Skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, we will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.**

6. It is no Sign that a Work that is wrought amongst a People is not from the Spirit of God, **That many that seem to be the Subjects of it, are guilty of great Imprudences and Irregularities in their Conduct**. We are to consider that the End for which God pours out his Spirit, is to make Men holy, and not to make them Politicians. It is no Wonder at all, that in a

mixed Multitude of all sorts, wise and unwise, young and old, of weak and strong natural Abilities, that are under strong Impressions of Mind, there are many that behave themselves imprudently. There are but few that know how to conduct them under vehement Affections of any Kind, whether they be of a temporal or spiritual Nature: to do so requires a great deal of Discretion, and strength and steadiness of Mind. A thousand Imprudences will not prove a Work not to be the Work of the Spirit of God; yea if there be not only Imprudences, but many Things prevailing that are irregular, and really contrary to the Rules of God's holy Word. That it should be thus may be well accounted for from the exceeding Weakness of human Nature, together with the remaining Darkness and Corruption of those that are yet the Subjects of the saving Influences of God's Spirit, and have a real Zeal for God.

We have a remarkable Instance in the New Testament, of a People that partook largely of that great Effusion of the Spirit there was in the Apostles Days, among whom, there nevertheless abounded Imprudences and great Irregularities; and that is the Church of the **Corinthians**. There is scarce any Church more celebrated in the New Testament for being blessed with large Measures of the Spirit of God, both in his ordinary Influences, in convincing and converting Sinners, and also in his extraordinary and miraculous Gifts; yet what manifold Imprudences, and great and sinful Irregularities, and strange Confusion did they run into, at the Lord's Supper, and in the Exercise of Church Discipline, and their indecent Manner of attending other Parts of public Worship, and in Jarring and Contention about their Teachers, and even in

the Exercise of their extraordinary Gifts of Prophecy, speaking with Tongues, and the like, wherein they spake and acted by the immediate Inspiration of the Spirit of God?

And if we see great Imprudences, and even sinful Irregularities in some that are improved as great Instruments to carry on the Work, it will not prove it not to be the Work of God. The Apostle **Peter** himself, that was a great and eminently holy and inspired Apostle, and one of the chief Instruments of setting up the Christian Church in the World, and one of the Chief of the Apostles, when he was actually engaged in this Work, was guilty of a great and sinful Error in his Conduct; of which the Apostle **Paul** speaks, Galatians 2:11, 12, 13. **But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the Face, because he was to be blamed; for before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles, but when they were come, he withdrew, and separated himself, fearing them that were of the Circumcision; and the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their Dissimulation.** If the great Pillar of the Christian Church, and he who was one of the Chief of those that are the very Foundations on which, next to Christ, the whole Church is said to be built, was guilty of such an Irregularity; is it any Wonder if other lesser Instruments, that have not that extraordinary Conduct of the divine Spirit that he had, should be guilty of many Irregularities?

And here in particular, it is no Evidence that a Work is not the Work of God, if many that are the Subjects of it, or are improved as Instruments to carry it on, are guilty of too great a forwardness **to censure others as Unconverted**, through Mistakes they have

embraced concerning the Marks by which they are to judge of others Hypocrisy and Carnality; either not duly apprehending the Latitude the Spirit of God uses in the Methods of his Operations, or for want of making due Allowance for that Infirmary and Corruption that may be left in the Hearts of the Saints; as well as through want of a due Sense of their own Blindness and Weakness, and remaining Corruption, whereby spiritual Pride may have a secret Vent, this Way, under some Disguise, and not be discovered.

If we allow that truly pious Men may have a great deal of remaining Blindness and Corruption, and may be liable to Mistakes about the Marks of Hypocrisy, as undoubtedly all will allow; then it is not unaccountable that they should sometimes run into such Errors as these: It is as easy, and upon some Accounts, more easy to be accounted for, why the remaining Corruption of good Men should sometimes have an unobserved Vent this Way, than most other Ways, (though it be exceeding unhappy,) and without Doubt many holy Men have erred this Way.

Lukewarmness in Religion is abominable, and Zeal an excellent Grace; yet above all other Christian Virtues, it needs to be strictly watched and searched; for it is that with which Corruption, and particularly Pride and human Passion, is exceeding apt to mix unobserved. And it is observable that there never was a Time of great Reformation, to cause a Revival of much of a Spirit of **Zeal** in the Church of God, but that it has been attended in some notable Instances, with Irregularity, running out some Way or other into an undue **Severity**. Thus in the Apostles Days, a great deal of Zeal was spent about unclean Meats, with heat of Spirit in Christians one against another, both Parties condemning and censuring one another, as not true Christians; when the Apostle had Charity for

both, as influenced by a Spirit of real Piety: **He that eats, says he, to the Lord he eats, and giveth God Thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God Thanks.** So in the Church of **Corinth**, they had got into a Way of extolling some Ministers, and censuring others, and were puffed up for one against another: but yet these Things were no Sign that the Work that was then so wonderfully carried on, was not the Work of God. And after this, when Religion was still greatly flourishing in the World, and a Spirit of eminent Holiness and Zeal prevailed in the Christian Church, the Zeal of Christians run out into a very improper and undue Severity, in the Exercise of Church Discipline towards Delinquents; in some Cases they would by no Means admit them into their Charity and Communion, though they appeared never so humble and penitent. And in the Days of **Constantine the Great**, the Zeal of Christians against Heathenism, run out into a Degree of Persecution. So in that glorious Revival of Religion, in the Time of the Reformation, Zeal in many Instances appeared in a very improper Severity, and even a Degree of Persecution; yea in some of the most eminent Reformers; as in the great **Calvin** in particular: and many in those Days of the flourishing of vital Religion, were guilty of severely censuring others that differed from them in Opinion in some Points of Divinity.

7. Nor are **many Errors in Judgment, and some Delusions of Satan intermixed with the Work**, any Argument that the Work in general is not the Work of the Spirit of God. However great a pouring out of the Spirit there may be, it is not to be expected that the Spirit of God should be given now in the same Manner that it was to the Apostles, infallibly to guide

them in Points of Christian Doctrine, so that what they taught might be relied on as a Rule to the Christian Church. And if many Delusions of Satan appear at the same Time that a great religious Concern prevails, it is not an Argument that the Work in general is not the Work of God, any more than it was an Argument in **Egypt** that there were no true Miracles wrought there, by the Hand of God, because **Jannes** and **Jambres** wrought false Miracles at the same Time by the Hand of the Devil. Yea the same Persons may be the Subjects of much of the Influences of the Spirit of God, and yet in some Things be led away by the Delusions of the Devil; and this be no more of a Paradox than many other Things that are true of real Saints, in the present State, where Grace dwells with so much Corruption, and the new Man and the old Man subsist together in the same Person; and the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of the Devil remain for a while together in the same Heart. Many godly Persons have undoubtedly in this and other Ages, exposed themselves to woeful Delusions, by an Aptness to lay too much Weight on Impulses and Impressions, as if they were immediate Revelations from God, to signify something future, or to direct them where to go and what to do.

8. If some such as were thought to be wrought upon, **fall away into gross Errors or scandalous Practices**, it is no Argument that the Work in general is not the Work of the Spirit of God. That there are some Counterfeits, is no Argument that nothing is true: such Things are always expected in a Time of Reformation. If we look into Church History, we shall find no Instance of great Revival of Religion, but what has been attended with many such Things. Instances of this Nature in the Apostles Days were innumerable, both of those that fell away into gross Heresies, and also

vile Practices; that yet seemed to be the Subjects of that Work of the Spirit of God that was then, and were accepted for a while amongst those that were truly so, as their Brethren, and some of their Company, and were not suspected not to be of them, till they went out from them. And they were not only private Christians, but Teachers and Officers, and eminent Persons in the Christian Church; and some that God had endowed with miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghost; as appears by the Beginning of the Sixth Chapter of **Hebrews**. An Instance of these was **Judas**, who was one of the twelve Apostles, and had long been constantly united to, and intimately conversant with a Company of truly experienced Disciples, without being discovered or suspected, till he discovered himself by his scandalous Practice; and had been treated by Jesus himself, in all external Things, as if he had truly been a Disciple, even to the investing him with the Character of Apostle, and sending him forth to preach the Gospel, and endowing him with miraculous Gifts of the Spirit. For though Christ knew him, yet he did not then clothe himself with the Character of Omniscient Judge, and Searcher of Hearts, but acted the Part of a Minister of the visible Church of God, (for he was his Father's Minister;) and therefore rejected him not, till he had discovered himself by his scandalous Practice; thereby giving an Example to other Guides and Rulers of the visible Church, not to take it upon them to act the Part of Searcher of Hearts, but to be influenced in their Administrations by what is visible and open.

There were some Instances then of such Apostates, not only in some that for a while were thought true Christians, but some that were esteemed eminently full of the Grace of God's Spirit. An Instance of this Nature was **Nicolas**, one of the seven Deacons;

who was looked upon by the Christians in **Jerusalem**, in the Time of that extraordinary pouring out of the Spirit, as a Man full of the Holy Ghost, and was chosen out of the Multitude of Christians to that Office, for that Reason; as you may see in **Acts** 6:3, 5. Yet he afterwards fell away, and became the Head of a Set of vile Heretics, of gross Practices, called from his Name the Sect of the **Nicolaitans**, Revelation 2:6, **and** 15.

So in the Time of the Reformation from Popery, how great was the Number of those that for a while seemed to join with the Reformers, that fell away into the grossest and most absurd Errors, and abominable Practices.

And it is particularly observable that in Times of great pouring out of the Spirit to revive Religion in the World, a Number of those that for a while seemed to partake in it, have fallen off into whimsical and extravagant Errors, and gross Enthusiasm, boasting of high Degrees of Spirituality and Perfection, censuring and condemning others as Carnal. Thus it was with the **Gnostics** in the Apostles Times; and thus it was with the several Sects of **Anabaptists** in the Time of the Reformation, as **Anthony Burgess** observes, in his Book called **Spiritual Refining**, Part 1, Sermon 23, Page 132. The first worthy Reformers, and glorious Instruments of God found a bitter Conflict herein, so that they were exercised not only with Formalists, and traditionary Papists on the one Side, but Men that pretended themselves to be more enlightened than the Reformers were, on the other Side. Hence they called those that did adhere to the Scripture, and would try Revelations by it, **Literists**, and **Vowelists**, as Men acquainted with the Words and Vowels of the Scripture, having nothing of the Spirit of God. And wheresoever, in any Town, the true Doctrine of

the Gospel broke forth to the displacing of Popery, presently such Opinions arose, like Tares that came up among the good Wheat; whereby great Divisions were raised, and the Reformation made abominable and odious to the World; as if that had been the Sun to give Heat and Warmth to those Worms and Serpents to crawl out of the Ground. Hence they inveighed against **Luther**, and said he had only promulgated a carnal Gospel. Some of the Leaders of those wild Enthusiasts, had been for a while, highly esteemed by the first Reformers, and peculiarly dear to them.

So in **England** at the Time when vital Religion did much prevail in the Days of King **Charles** the First, the **Interregnum**, and **Oliver Cromwell**, such Things as these abounded. And so in the beginning of **New England**, in her purest Days, when vital Piety flourished, such Kind of Things as these broke out. Therefore the Devil's sowing such Tares is no Proof that a true Work of the Spirit of God is not gloriously carried on.

9. It is no Argument that a Work is not from the Spirit of God, **That it seems to be promoted by Ministers insisting very much on the Terrors of God's holy Law, and that with a great deal of Pathos and Earnestness.** If there be really a Hell of such dreadful, and never ending Torments, as is generally supposed, that Multitudes are in great Danger of, and that the greater Part of Men in Christian Countries do actually from Generation to Generation fall into, for want of a Sense of the Terribleness of it, and their Danger of it, and so for want of taking due Care to avoid it; then why is it not proper for those that have the Care of Souls, to take great Pains to make Men sensible of it? Why should not they be told as much of the Truth as can be? If I am in Danger of going to Hell, I should be glad to know as much as possibly I can of

the Dreadfulness of it. If I am very prone to neglect due Care to avoid it, he does me the best Kindness, that does most to represent to me the Truth of the Case, that sets forth my Misery and Danger in the liveliest Manner.

I appeal to every one in this Congregation, whether this is not the very Course they would take in Case of Exposedness to any great temporal Calamity? If any of you that are Heads of Families, saw one of your Children in an House that was all on Fire over its Head, and in eminent Danger of being soon consumed in the Flames, that seemed to be very insensible of its Danger, and neglected to escape, after you had often spoke to it, and called to it, would you go on to speak to it only in a cold and indifferent Manner? Would not you cry aloud, and call earnestly to it, and represent the Danger it was in, and its own Folly in delaying, in the most lively Manner you were capable of? Would not Nature itself teach this, and oblige you to it? If you should continue to speak to it only in a cold Manner, as you are wont to do in ordinary Conversation about indifferent Matters, would not those about you begin to think you were bereft of Reason yourself? This is not the Way of Mankind, nor the Way of any one Person in this Congregation, in temporal Affairs of great Moment, that require earnest Heed and great Haste, and about which they are greatly concerned, to speak to others of their Danger, and warn them but a little; and when they do it at all, do it in a cold indifferent Manner: Nature teaches Men otherwise. If we that have the Care of Souls, knew what Hell was, had seen the State of the Damned, or by any other Means, become sensible how dreadful their Case was; and at the same Time knew that the greater Part of Men went thither; and saw our Hearers in eminent Danger, and that they were not sensi-

ble of their Danger, and so after being often warned neglected to escape, it would be morally impossible for us to avoid abundantly and most earnestly setting before them the Dreadfulness of that Misery they were in Danger of, and their great Exposedness to it, and Warning them to fly from it, and even to cry aloud to them.

When Ministers preach of Hell, and warn Sinners to avoid it, in a cold Manner, though they may say in Words that it is infinitely terrible; yet (if we look on Language as a Communication of our Minds to others) they contradict themselves; for Actions, as I observed before, have a Language to convey our Minds, as well as Words; and at the same Time that such a Preacher's Words represent the Sinner's State as infinitely dreadful, his Behaviour and Manner of speaking contradict it, and show that the Preacher does not think so; so that he defeats his own Purpose; for the Language of his Actions, in such a Case, is much more effectual than the bare Signification of his Words.

Not that I think that the Law only should be preached: Ministers may preach other Things too little. The Gospel is to be preached as well as the Law, and the Law is to be preached only to make Way for the Gospel, and in order to an effectual preaching of that; for the main Work of Ministers of the Gospel is to preach the Gospel: it is the End of the Law; **Christ is the End of the Law for Righteousness:** So that a Minister would miss it very much if he should insist so much on the Terrors of the Law, as to forget his End, and neglect to preach the Gospel; but yet the Law is very much to be insisted on, and the preaching of the Gospel is like to be in vain without it.

And certainly such Earnestness and Affection in speaking is beautiful, as becomes the Nature and Importance of the Subject. Not but that there may be such a Thing as an indecent Boisterousness in a Preacher, that is something besides what naturally arises from the Nature of his Subject, and in which the Matter and Manner do not well agree together.

Some talk of it as an unreasonable Thing to think to frighten Persons to Heaven; but I think it is a reasonable Thing to endeavour to frighten Persons away from Hell, that stand upon the Brink of it, and are just ready to fall into it, and are senseless of their Danger. It is a reasonable Thing to frighten a Person out of an House on Fire. The Word **Fright** is commonly used for sudden causeless Fear, or groundless Surprise; but surely a just Fear, that there is good Reason for, though it be very great, is not to be spoken against under any such Name.

Having thus shown, in some Instances, what are not Evidences that a Work that is wrought among a People, is not a Work of the Spirit of God,

I now proceed in the **Second Place**, as was proposed, to show positively, What are the sure, distinguishing, Scripture Evidences and Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God, by which we may proceed in judging of any Operation we find in ourselves, or see among a People, without Danger of being misled.

And in this, as I said before, I shall confine myself wholly to those Marks which are given us by the Apostle in the Chapter wherein is my Text, where this Matter is particularly handled, and

more plainly and fully than anywhere else in the Bible. And in speaking to these Marks, I shall take them in the Order in which I find them in the Chapter.

1. When that Spirit that is at work amongst a People is observed to operate after such a Manner, as to raise their Esteem of that **Jesus** that was born of **the Virgin**, and was crucified without the Gates of **Jerusalem**; and seems more to confirm and establish their Minds in the Truth of what the Gospel declares to us of his being the Son of God, and the Saviour of Men; it is a sure Sign that that Spirit is the Spirit of God. This Sign the Apostle gives us in the second and third Verses **thereby know ye the Spirit of God; every Spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ 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.** This implies a confessing, not only that there was such a Person that appeared in **Palestine**, and did and suffered those Things that are recorded of him, but that that Person was **CHRIST**, that is the Son of God, the Anointed of God to be Lord and Saviour, as the Name **Jesus Christ** implies. That thus much is implied in the Apostle's Meaning, is confirmed by the 15th **Verse**, where the Apostle is still on the same Subject of Signs of the true Spirit, **Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.**

And it is to be observed that the Word **confess**, as it is often used in the New Testament, signifies more than merely **allowing**: It implies an establishing and confirming a Thing by Testimony, and declaring it with manifestation of Esteem and Affection: so Matthew 10:32. **Whosoever therefore shall confess me before Men, him will I confess also before my Father which**

is in Heaven. Romans 15:9. **I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy Name.** And Philippians 2:11. **That every Tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father.** And that this is the Force of the Expression, as the Apostle **John** uses it in this Place, is confirmed by that other Place in the same Epistle, in the next Chapter, at the first Verse, **Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God; and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him.** And by that parallel Place of the Apostle **Paul**, where we have the same Rule given to distinguish the true Spirit from all Counterfeits, 1 Corinthians 12:3. **Wherefore I give you to understand, that no Man speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed, (or will show an ill or mean Esteem of him) and that no Man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.**

So that if the Spirit that is at work among a People, is plainly observed to work after that Manner, as to convince them of Christ, and lead them to Christ; more to confirm their Minds in the Belief of the Story of Christ, as he appeared in the Flesh, and that he is the Son of God, and was sent of God to save Sinners, and that he is the only Saviour, and that they stand in great need of him; and seems to beget in them higher and more honourable Thoughts of him than they used to have, and to incline their Affections more to him; it is a sure Sign that it is the true and right Spirit; and that whether we can determine whether that Conviction and Affection be in that Manner, or to that Degree, as to be saving or no.

But the Words of the Apostle are remarkable; The Person that the Spirit gives Testimony to and to whom he raises their Esteem and Respect, must be that **Jesus that appeared in the Flesh,**

and not another Christ in his Stead; not any mystical, fantastical Christ; such as the **Light within**, which the Spirit of the **Quakers** extols, while it diminishes their Esteem of, and Dependence upon an outward Christ, or Jesus as he came in the Flesh, and leads them off from him; but the Spirit that gives Testimony for that Jesus, and leads to Him, can be no other than the Spirit of God.

The Devil has the most bitter and implacable Enmity against that Person, especially in his Character of the Saviour of Men; he mortally hates the Story and Doctrine of his Redemption; he never would go about to beget in Men more honourable Thoughts of him, and so to incline them more to fear him, and lay greater Weight on his Instructions and Commands. The Spirit that inclines Mens Hearts to the Seed of the Woman, is not the Spirit of the Serpent, that has such an irreconcilable Enmity against him. He that heightens Mens Esteem of the glorious **Michael**, that Prince of the Angels, is not the Spirit of the **Dragon** that is at War with him.

2. When the Spirit that is at work **operates against the Interest of Satan's Kingdom, which lies in encouraging and establishing Sin, and cherishing Mens worldly Lusts**; this is a sure Sign that it is a true, and not a false Spirit. This Sign we have given us in the fourth and fifth Verses. **Ye are of God, little Children, and have overcome them; because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the World. They are of the World, therefore speak they of the World, and the World heareth them.** Here is a plain **Antithesis**: It is evident that the Apostle is still comparing those that are influenced by the two opposite Kinds of Spirits, the true and the false, and showing

the Difference; the one are of God, and overcome the Spirit of the World; the other are of the World, and speak and savour the Things of the World. The Spirit of the Devil is here called, **He that is in the World**. Christ says, **My Kingdom is not of this World**. But it is otherwise with Satan's Kingdom; he is **the God of this World**.

What the Apostle means by **the World**, or the Things that are **of the World**, we learn by his own Words, in the second Chapter of this Epistle 15th and 16th Verses. **Love not the World, neither the Things that are in the World: If any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him: For all that is in the World, the Lust of the Flesh, and the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, is not of the Father, but is of the World**. So that by **the World**, the Apostle evidently means every Thing that appertains to the Interest of Sin, and comprehends all the Corruptions and Lusts of Men, and all those Acts and Objects by which they are gratified. In these Things lies the Interest of his Kingdom, who is **the Spirit that is in the World**, and is the **God of the World**.

So that we may safely determine, from what the Apostle says, that the Spirit that is at work amongst a People, that is observed to work after such a Manner, as to lessen Mens Esteem of the Pleasures, Profits and Honours of the World, and to take off their Hearts from an eager Pursuit after these Things; and to engage them in a deep Concern about a future and eternal Happiness in that invisible World, that the Gospel reveals; and puts them upon earnest seeking the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness; and

convinces them of the Dreadfulness of Sin, the Guilt that it brings, and the Misery that it exposes to: I say, the Spirit that operates after such a Manner, must needs be the Spirit of God.

It is not to be supposed that Satan would go about to convince Men of Sin, and awaken the Conscience; it can no Way serve his End, to make that Candle of the Lord shine the brighter, and to open the Mouth of that Vicegerent of God in the Soul: It is for his Interest, whatever he does, to lull Conscience asleep, and keep that quiet; to have that, with its Eyes and Mouth open in the Soul, will tend to clog and hinder all his Designs of Darkness, and ever more to be disturbing his Affairs, and crossing his Interest in the Soul, and disquieting him, so that he can manage nothing to his Mind without Molestation. Would the Devil when he is about to establish Men in a Way and State of Sin, take such a Course, in the first Place to enlighten and awaken the Conscience to see the Dreadfulness of Sin, and make them exceedingly afraid of Sin, and sensible of their Misery by Reason of their past Sins, and their great Need of Deliverance from the Guilt of them, and more careful, inquisitive and watchful to discern what is sinful; and to avoid future Sins; and so more afraid of the Devil's Temptations, and careful to guard against them? What do those Men do with their Reason, that suppose that the Spirit that operates thus, is the Spirit of the Devil?

Possibly some may say, That the Devil may even awaken Mens Consciences to deceive them, and make them think they have been the Subjects of a saving Work of the Spirit of God, while they are indeed still in the Gall of Bitterness. But to this it may be replied, That the Man that has an awakened Conscience is the least likely to be deceived of any Man in the World: It is the drowsy, insensi-

ble, stupid Conscience, that is most easily blinded. The more sensible Conscience is in a diseased Soul, the less easily is it quieted without a real Healing. The more sensible Conscience is made of the Dreadfulness of Sin, and of the Greatness of a Man's own Guilt of it, the less likely is he to rest in his own Righteousness, or to be pacified with nothing but Shadows. A Man that has been thoroughly terrified with a Sense of his Danger and Misery, is not easily flattered and made to believe himself safe, without any good Grounds.

To awaken Conscience, and convince of the Evil of Sin, cannot tend to establish Sin, but certainly tends to make Way for Sin and Satan's being cast out. Therefore this is a good Argument that the Spirit that operates thus, cannot be the Spirit of the Devil; if Christ knew how to argue, who told the **Pharisees**, that supposed that the Spirit that he wrought by, was the Spirit of the Devil, **that Satan would not cast out Satan**, Matthew 12:25, 26.

And therefore if we see Persons made sensible of the dreadful Nature of Sin, and of the Displeasure of God against it, and of their own miserable Condition as they are in themselves, by Reason of Sin, and earnestly concerned for their eternal Salvation, and sensible of their Need of God's Pity and Help, and engaged to seek it in the Use of the Means that God has appointed, we may certainly conclude that it is from the Spirit of God, whatever Effects this Concern has on their Bodies; though it causes them to cry out aloud, or to shriek, or to faint, or though it throws them into Convulsions, or whatever other Way the Blood and Spirits are moved.

The Influence of the Spirit of God is yet more abundantly manifest, if Persons have their Hearts **drawn off** from the World, and **weaned** from the Objects of their worldly Lusts, and taken off from worldly Pursuits, by the Sense they have of the Excellency of divine Things, and the Affection they have to those spiritual Enjoyments of another World, that are promised in the Gospel.

3. That spirit that operates in such a manner, as to **cause in men a greater regard to the holy Scriptures, and establishes them more in their truth and divinity**, is certainly the Spirit of God. This rule the Apostle gives us in the sixth verse: **We are of God; he that knows God hears us: He that is not of God, hears not us: Hereby we know the Spirit of Truth, and the Spirit of Error. We are of God;** that is, We, the Apostles, are sent forth of God, and appointed of him, to teach the world, and to deliver that doctrine, those instructions that are to be their rule; therefore **he that knows God, hears us** and so forth. The Apostle's argument in the verse equally reaches all that in the same sense **are of God**, that is, all those that God has appointed and inspired to deliver to his Church its rule of faith and practice; all the **Prophets and Apostles**, whose doctrine God has made the foundation on which he has built his Church, as in **Ephesians 2:20**; all the penmen of the holy Scriptures. The Devil never would go about to beget in persons a regard to that divine Word, which God has given to be the great and standing rule for the direction of his Church in all religious matters and concerns of their souls, in all ages. A spirit of delusion will not incline persons to go to seek direction at the mouth of God. **To the Law and to the Testimony**, is never the cry of those evil spirits that **have no light in them**; for it is God's own direction to discover their delu-

sions, Isaiah 8:19, 20. **And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the Law, and to the Testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.** The Devil does not say the same as **Abraham** did, **They have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them:** Nor the same that the voice from Heaven did concerning Christ, **Hear ye him.** Would the spirit of error, in order to deceive men, beget in them a high opinion of the infallible rule, and incline them to think much of it, and be very conversant with it? Would the Prince of Darkness, in order to promote his kingdom of darkness, lead men to the sun? The Devil has ever shown a mortal spite and hatred towards that holy Book, the Bible: He has done all that has been in his power to extinguish that light, and to draw men off from it: He knows that it is that light by which his kingdom of darkness is to be overthrown. He has had for many ages experience of its power to defeat his purposes, and baffle his designs: It is his constant plague: It is the main weapon which **Michael** uses in his war with him: It is the sword of the Spirit, that pierces him, and conquers him: It is that **great, and sore, and strong sword**, with which God **punishes Leviathan, that crooked Serpent:** It is that sharp sword that we read of, Revelation 19:15, **that proceeds out of the mouth of him that sat on the horse**, with which he smites his enemies. Every text is a dart to torment the old Serpent: He has felt the stinging smart thousands of times; therefore he is enraged against the Bible, and hates every word in it: And therefore we may be sure that he never will go about to raise persons' esteem of it, or

affection to it. And accordingly we see it to be common in enthusiasts, that they depreciate this written rule, and set up the **light within**, or some other rule above it.

4. Another rule to judge of spirits may be drawn from those opposite compellations given to the two opposite spirits, in the last words of the sixth verse, **The SPIRIT OF TRUTH, and the SPIRIT OF ERROR.** These words do exhibit the two opposite characters of the Spirit of God, and other spirits that counterfeit his operations. And therefore, if by observing the manner of the operation of a spirit that is at work among a people, we see that it operates as a **Spirit of Truth**, leading persons to **truth**, convincing them of those things that are true, we may safely determine that it is a right and true spirit. As for instance, if we observe that the spirit that is at work, makes men more sensible than they used to be, that there is a God, and that he is a great God, and a sin-hating God; and makes them more to realize it, that they must die, and that life is short, and very uncertain; and confirms persons in it that there is another world, that they have immortal souls, and that they must give account of themselves to God; and convinces them that they are exceedingly sinful by nature and practice; and that they are helpless in themselves; and confirms them in other things that are agreeable to sound doctrine: The spirit that works thus, operates as a spirit of truth: He represents things as they are indeed: He brings men to the light; for whatever makes truth manifest, is light; as the Apostle **Paul** observes, Ephesians 5:13. **But all things that are reprov'd (or discover'd, as it is in the margin) are made manifest by the light; for whatsoever does make manifest is light.** And therefore we may conclude that it is not the spirit of darkness, that does thus **discover**, and

make manifest the truth. Christ tells us that Satan **is a liar, and the father of lies**; and his kingdom is a **kingdom of darkness**. It is upheld and promoted only by darkness and error: Satan has all his power and dominion by darkness. Hence we read of **the power of darkness**, Luke 22:53 and Colossians 1:13. And devils are called **the rulers of the darkness of this world**. Whatever spirit removes our darkness, and brings up to the light; undeceives us, and convinces us of the truth; does us a kindness. If I am brought to a sight of truth, and am made sensible of things as they be, my duty is immediately to thank God for it, without standing first to inquire by what means I have such a benefit.

5. If the spirit that is at work among a people **operates as a spirit of love to God and man**, it is a sure sign that it is the Spirit of God. This sign the Apostle insists upon from the sixth verse to the end of the chapter: **Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and every one that loves is born of God, and knows God: He that loves not, knows not God, for God is love and so forth**. Here it is evident, that the Apostle is still comparing those two sorts of persons that are influenced by the opposite kinds of spirits; and mentions **love** as a mark by which we may know who has the true spirit: But this is especially evident by the twelfth and thirteenth verses, **If we love one another, God dwells in us, and his love is perfected in us: Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit**. In these verses **love** is spoken of as if it were that wherein the very nature of the Holy Spirit consisted; or as if divine love dwelling in us, and the Spirit of God dwelling in us, were the same thing; as it is also in the two last verses of the foregoing chapter; as also in the sixteenth verse of

this chapter. Therefore this last mark which the Apostle gives of the true spirit, he seems to speak of as the most eminent; and so insists much more largely upon it, than upon all the rest; and speaks expressly of both love to God and men; of **love to men**, in the seventh, eleventh and twelfth verses; and of **love to God**, in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth verses; and of both together, in the two last verses; and of **love to men**, as arising from **love to God**, in these two last verses.

Therefore when the spirit that is at work amongst a people, tends this way, and brings many of them to high and exalting thoughts of the divine Being, and his glorious perfections; and works in them an admiring, delightful sense of the excellency of Jesus Christ; representing Him as the chief among ten thousands, altogether lovely, and makes him precious to the soul; winning and drawing the heart with those motives and incitements to love, which the Apostle speaks of in that passage of Scripture we are upon, **namely** the wonderful, free love of God in giving his only begotten Son to die for us, and the wonderful dying love of Christ to us, who had no love to him, but were his enemies; as Verses 9 and 10. **In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.** And Verse 16: **And we have known, and believed the love that God has to us.** And Verse 19: **We love him, because he first loved us.** The spirit excites to love on these motives, and makes the attributes of God as revealed in the Gospel, and manifested in Christ, delightful objects of contemplation; and makes the soul to long after God and

Christ, after their presence and communion, and acquaintance with them, and conformity to them; and to live so as to please and honor them: And also quells contentions among men, and gives a spirit of peace and good-will, excites to acts of outward kindness, and earnest desires of the salvation of others' souls; and causes a delight in those that appear as the children of God, and followers of Christ: I say when a spirit operates after this manner among a people, there is the highest kind of evidence of the influence of a true and divine Spirit.

Indeed there is a Counterfeit of Love, that often appears amongst those that are led by a Spirit of Delusion: There is commonly in the wildest Enthusiasts a Kind of Union and Affection that appears in them one towards another, arising from Self-Love, occasioned by their agreeing one with another in those Things wherein they greatly differ from all others, and for which they are the Objects of the Ridicule of all the rest of Mankind; which naturally will cause them so much the more to prize the Esteem they observe in each other, of those Peculiarities that make them the Objects of others Contempt: So the ancient **Gnostics** and the wild **Fanatics**, that appeared in the Beginning of the Reformation, boasted of their great Love one to another: One Sect of them in particular, calling themselves the **Family of Love**. But this is quite another Thing than that Christian Love that I have just described; it is only the working of a natural Self-Love, and no true **Benevolence**, any more than the Union and Friendship which may be among a Company of Pirates, that are at War with all the rest of the World. There is sufficient said in this Passage of Saint **John**, that we are upon, of the Nature and Motive of a truly Christian Love, thoroughly to distinguish it from all such

Counterfeits. It is Love that arises from an Apprehension of the wonderful Riches of free Grace, and Sovereignty of God's Love to us, in Christ Jesus; being attended with a Sense of our own utter Unworthiness, as in ourselves the Enemies and Haters of God and Christ, and with a Renunciation of all our own Excellency and Righteousness. See **Verse 9, 10, 11, and 19**. The surest Character of true divine supernatural Love, distinguishing it from Counterfeits that do arise from a natural Self-Love, is that That Christian Virtue shines in it, that does above all others renounce and abase and annihilate Self, namely **Humility**. Christian Love, or true Charity, is an humble Love, 1 Corinthians 13:4, 5. **Charity vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked**. When therefore we see Love in Persons attended with a Sense of their own Littleness, Vileness, Weakness, and utter Insufficiency; and so with Self-Diffidence, Self-Emptiness, Self-Renunciation, and Poverty of Spirit, there are the manifest Tokens of the Spirit of God: He that thus dwells in Love, dwells in God, and God in him. The Love the Apostle speaks of as a great Evidence of the true Spirit, is **God's Love, or Christ's Love**; as Verse 12.—**His Love is perfected in us**. What Kind of Love that is, we may see best in what appeared in Christ, in the Example he set us, when he was here upon Earth. The Love that appeared in that Lamb of God, was not only a Love to Friends, but to Enemies, and a Love attended with a meek and humble Spirit. **Learn of me, says he, for I am meek and lowly in Heart**.

Love and Humility are two Things the most contrary to the Spirit of the Devil, of any Thing in the World; for the Character of that Evil Spirit, above all Things, consists in Pride and Malice.

Thus I have spoken particularly to the several Marks the Apostle gives us of a Work of the true Spirit. There are some of these Things the Devil would not do if he could: Thus, he would not awaken the Conscience, and make Men sensible of their miserable State by Nature, by Reason of Sin, and sensible of their great Need of a Savior: And he would not confirm Men in a Belief that Jesus is the Son of God, and the Savior of Sinners, or raise Men's Value and Esteem of Him: He would not beget in Men's Minds an Opinion of the Necessity, Usefulness and Truth of the Holy Scriptures, or incline them to hearken to them, or make much Use of them; nor would he go about to show Men the Truth, in Things that concern their Souls Interest; to undeceive them, and lead them out of Darkness into Light, and give them a View of Things as they are indeed. And there are other Things that the Devil neither can nor will do: He will not give Men a Spirit of Divine Love, or Christian Humility and Poverty of Spirit; nor could he if he would: He cannot give those Things which he has not himself: These Things are as contrary as possible to his Nature. And therefore when there is an extraordinary Influence or Operation appearing on the Minds of a People, if these Things are found in it, we are safe in determining that it is the Work of God, whatever other Circumstances it may be attended with, whatever Instruments are improved, whatever Methods are taken to promote it; whatever Means a sovereign God, whose Judgments are a great Deep, makes Use of to carry it on; and whatever Motions there may be of the animal Spirits, whatever Effects may be wrought on Men's Bodies. These Marks, that the Apostle has given us, are sufficient to stand alone, and support themselves; and wherever they be, they plainly show the Finger of God, and are sufficient to outweigh a Thousand

such little Objections, as many make from Oddities, Irregularities, and Errors in Conduct, and the Delusions and Scandals of some Professors.

Objection. But here some may object against the Sufficiency of the Marks given, what the Apostle **Paul** says, in 2 Corinthians 11:13, 14. **For such are false Apostles, deceitful Workers, transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ; and no Marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an Angel of Light.**

To which I Answer, That this can be no Objection against the Sufficiency of these Marks to distinguish the true Spirit from the false Spirit, in those **false Apostles** and **false Prophets**, which the Apostle speaks of, in whom the Devil was **transformed into an Angel of Light**, because it is principally with a View to them that the Apostle gives these Marks; as appears by the Words of the Text, **Believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits, whether they are of God:** And this is the Reason he gives, **Because many false Prophets are gone out into the World:** There are many gone out into the World that are the Ministers of the Devil, that **transform themselves** into the Prophets of God, in whom the Spirit of the Devil **is transformed into an Angel of Light;** therefore try the Spirits by these Rules that I shall give you, that you may be able to distinguish the true Spirit from the false Spirit, under such a crafty Disguise. Those **false Prophets** the Apostle **John** speaks of, are doubtless the same Sort of Men with those **false Apostles**, and **deceitful Workers**, that the Apostle **Paul** speaks of, in that Place in the second of **Corinthians**, in whom **the Devil was transformed into an Angel of Light:** And therefore we may be sure that these Marks

the Apostle gives, are especially adapted to distinguish between the true Spirit, and the Devil transformed into an Angel of Light, because they are given especially for that End; that is the Apostle's declared Purpose and Design, to give Marks by which the true Spirit may be distinguished from that Sort of Counterfeits.

And if we look over what is said about these **false Prophets**, and **false Apostles**, (as there is much said about them in the New Testament) and take Notice in what Manner the Devil was transformed into an Angel of Light in them, we shall not find any Thing that in the least injures the Sufficiency of these Marks to distinguish the true Spirit from such Counterfeits. The Devil transformed himself into an Angel of Light, as there was in them a Show, and great Boasts of extraordinary Knowledge in divine Things; **Colossians** 2:8; **1 Timothy** 1:6, 7 and **Chapter** 6:3, 4, 5; **2 Timothy** 2:14, 16, 17, 18; **Titus** 1:10, 16. Hence their Followers called themselves **Gnostics**, from their great pretended Knowledge: And the Devil in them mimicked the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Spirit, in Visions, Revelations, Prophecies, Miracles, and the immediate Conduct of the Spirit in what they did: Hence they are called **false Apostles**, and **false Prophets**: See **Matthew** 24:24. Again, there was a false Show of, and lying Pretenses to great Holiness and Devotion in Words: **Romans** 16:17, 18; **Ephesians** 4:14. Hence they are called **deceitful Workers**, and **Wells**, and **Clouds without Water**. **2 Corinthians** 11:13; **2 Peter** 2:17; **Jude** 12. There was also in them a Show of extraordinary Piety and Righteousness in their superstitious Worship: **Colossians** 2:16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23. So they had a false, proud, and bitter Zeal; **Galatians** 4:17, 18; **1 Timothy** 1:6 and **Chapter** 6:4, 5. And likewise a false **Show of Humility**,

in affecting an extraordinary outward Meanness and Dejection, when indeed they were **vainly puffed up with their fleshly Mind**; and made a Righteousness of their Humility, and were exceedingly lifted up with their eminent Piety: **Colossians** 2:18, 23. But how do such Things as these, in the least injure those Things that have been mentioned as the distinguishing Evidences of the true Spirit?

Besides such vain Shows which may be from the Devil, there are common Influences of the Spirit, which are often mistaken for saving Grace: But these are out of the Question, because though they are not saving, yet are the Work of the true Spirit.

Having thus fulfilled what I at first proposed, in considering what are the certain, distinguishing Marks, by which we may safely proceed in judging of any Work that falls under our Observation, whether it be the Work of the Spirit of God or not. I now proceed to the APPLICATION.

I. From what has been said, I will venture to draw this **Inference**, namely **That that extraordinary Influence that has lately appeared on the Minds of the People abroad in this Land, causing in them an uncommon Concern and Engagedness of Mind about the Things of Religion, is undoubtedly, in the general, from the Spirit of God.** There are but two Things that need to be known in order to such a Work's being judged of, namely **Facts** and **Rules**. The **Rules** of the Word of God we have had laid before us; and as to **Facts**, there are but two Ways that we can come at them, so as to be in a Capacity to compare them with the Rules, either by our own Observation, or by Information from others that have had Opportunity to observe.

As to this work that has lately been carried on in the land, there are many things concerning it that are notorious, and known by everybody, (unless it be some that have been very much out of the way of observing and hearing indeed) that unless the Apostle **John** was out in his rules, are sufficient to determine it to be in general, the work of God. It is notorious that the Spirit that is at work, takes off persons' minds from the vanities of the world, and engages them in a deep concern about a future and eternal happiness in another world, and puts them upon earnestly seeking their salvation, and convinces them of the dreadfulfulness of sin, and of their own guilty and miserable state as they are by nature. It is notorious that it awakens men's consciences, and makes them sensible of the dreadfulfulness of God's anger, and causes in them a great desire, and earnest care and endeavor to obtain his favor. It is notorious, that, in general, it puts them upon a more diligent improvement of the means of grace which God has appointed. It is also notorious, that, in general, it works in persons a greater regard to the word of God, and desire of hearing and reading of it, and to be more conversant with the holy Scriptures than they used to be. And it is notoriously manifest that the Spirit that is at work, in general, operates as a Spirit of Truth, making persons more sensible of what is really true, in those things that concern their eternal salvation: As that they must die, and that life is very short and uncertain; that there is a great, sin-hating God, that they are accountable to, and will fix them in an eternal state in another world, and that they stand in great need of a Savior. It is furthermore notorious, that the Spirit that is at work makes persons more sensible of the value of that Jesus that was crucified, and their need of him; and that it puts them upon earnestly seeking an interest in him. It

cannot be but that these things should be apparent to people in general through the land: for these things are not done in a corner; the work that has been wrought has not been confined to a few towns, in some remoter parts of the land, but has been carried on in many places in all parts of the land, and in most of the principal, and most populous, and public places in it, (Christ in this respect has wrought amongst us, in the same manner that he wrought his miracles in **Judea**) and has now been continued for a considerable time; so that there has been a great deal of opportunity to observe the manner of the work. And all such as have been much in the way of observing the work, and have been very conversant with those that have been the subjects of it, do see a great deal more that, by the rules of the Apostle, does clearly and certainly show it to be the work of God.

And here I would observe, that the nature and tendency of a Spirit that is at work, may be determined with much greater certainty, and less danger of being imposed upon, when it is observed in a great multitude of people of all sorts, and in various different places, than when it is only seen in a few, in some particular place, that have been much conversant one with another. A few particular persons may agree to put a cheat upon others, by a false pretense, and professing things that they never were conscious to in their own minds: But when the work is spread over great part of a country, in places distant one from another, among people of all sorts, and all ages, and in multitudes of persons, of sound mind, good understanding, and known integrity; there would be the greatest absurdity in supposing that, by all the observation that can be made by all that is heard from them and seen in them, for many months together, by those that are most intimate with them

in these affairs, and have long been acquainted with them, that yet it cannot be determined what kind of influence the operation they are under, has upon people's minds, whether it tends to awaken their consciences, or to stupefy them; whether it tends to incline them more to seek their salvation, or neglect it; whether it seems to confirm them in a belief of the Scriptures, or to lead them to Deism; whether it makes them have more regard to the great truths of religion, or less; and so in other things. There is probably no particular person here present, that thinks himself to have a right to be treated as one of a sound mind, and common sense, and veracity, but would think himself abused, if he should declare to others, that he had altered his mind in these and those particulars; he now found himself convinced of the truth of this or that, that formerly he did not believe; and that he found in himself such and such fears, that he did not use to have; or found a greater aversion than he was wont to have, or a greater esteem and affection to such and such things; and those that he made such a profession to would not believe him, though they had long been conversant with him, and though he persisted in this profession for many months together, and nothing appeared in him but what agreed thereto. But much more unreasonable it would be, when such professions are made, not by a particular person only, but a great part of a people in a land, to suppose that they all agree in professing what indeed they do not feel in their souls.

And here it is to be observed, that for persons to profess that they are convinced of these or those divine truths; or that they esteem and love such divine things, in a saving manner; and for them to profess, that they are more convinced or confirmed in the truth of them, than they used to be, and find that they have a

greater regard to them than before they had, are two very different things. Persons of honesty and common sense, have much greater right to demand credit to be given to the latter profession, than to the former; (though in the former it is vastly less likely that a people in general should be deceived, than some particular persons.) But whether persons' convictions, and the alteration in their dispositions and affections, be in a degree and manner that is saving, is beside the present question. If there be such effects on people's judgments, dispositions and affections, as have been spoken of, whether they be in a degree and manner that is saving or no, it is nevertheless a sign of the influence of the Spirit of God. Scripture rules serve to distinguish the common influences of the Spirit of God, as well as those that are saving, from the influence of other causes.

And as I am one that, by the providence of God, have for some months past, been much amongst those that have been the subjects of that work, that has of late been carried on in the land; and particularly, have been abundantly in the way of seeing and observing those extraordinary things that many persons have been much stumbled at; such as persons crying out aloud, shrieking, being put into great agonies of body, and deprived of their bodily strength, and the like; and that in many different towns; and have been very particularly conversant with great numbers of such, both in the time of their being the subjects of such extraordinary influences, and afterwards, from time to time, and have seen the manner and issue of such operations, and the fruits of them, for several months together; many of them being persons that I have long known, and have been intimately acquainted with them in soul concerns, before and since: So I look upon myself called on this oc-

casation to give my testimony, that so far as the nature and tendency of such a work is capable of falling under the observation of a bystander, to whom those that have been the subjects of it have endeavored to open their **Hearts**, or can be come at by diligent and particular inquiry, this work has all those marks that have been spoken of; in very many instances, in every article; and particularly in many of those that have been the subjects of such extraordinary operations, all those marks have appeared in a very great degree.

Those in whom have been these uncommon appearances, have been of two sorts; either those that have been in great distress, in an apprehension of their sin and misery; or those that have been overcome with a sweet sense of the greatness, wonderfulness and excellency of divine things. Of the multitude of those of the former sort, that I have had opportunity to observe, and have been acquainted with, there have been very few, but that by all that could be observed in them, in the time of it, or afterwards, their distress has arisen from real, proper conviction, and a being in a degree sensible of that which was the truth. And though I do not suppose, when such things were observed to be common, that persons have laid themselves under those violent restraints, to avoid outward manifestations of their distress, that perhaps they otherwise would have done; yet there have been very few in whom there has been any appearance of feigning or affecting such manifestations, and very many for whom it would have been undoubtedly utterly impossible for them to avoid them. Generally those that have been in these agonies have appeared to be in the perfect exercise of their reason; and those of them that have been able to speak, have been well able to give an account of the circumstances of their minds, and the cause of their distress, in the time of it, and well able to re-

member, and give an account afterwards. I have known a very few instances of those, that in their great extremity, have for a short space been deprived, in some measure of the use of reason; but among the many hundreds, and it may be thousands, that have lately been brought to such agonies, I never yet knew one, lastingly deprived of their reason. In some that I have known, melancholy has evidently been mixed; and when it is so, the difference is very apparent; their distresses are of another kind, and operate quite after another manner, than when their distress is from mere conviction: It is not truth only that distresses them, but many vain shadows and notions, that will not give place either to Scripture or reason. Some in their great distress, have not been well able to give an account of themselves, or to declare the sense they have of things, or to explain the manner and cause of their trouble to others, that yet I have had no reason to think were not under proper convictions, and in whom there has been manifested a good issue. But this will not be at all wondered at, by those who have had much to do with souls under spiritual difficulties. Some things that they are sensible of are altogether new to them, their ideas and inward sensations are new, and what they therefore knew not how to accommodate language to, or to find words to express. And some who on first inquiry, say they know not what was the matter with them, on being particularly examined and interrogated, have been able to represent their case, though of themselves they could not find expressions, and forms of speech to do it.

Some say they think that the terrors that such persons are in, that have such effects on their bodies, is only a **Fright**. But certainly there ought to be a distinction made between a very great fear, and extreme distress, arising from an apprehension of some

dreadful **Truth**, that is a cause that is fully proportionable to such an effect, and a needless causeless fright: which is of two kinds; either when persons are terrified with that which is not the truth; (of this I have seen very few instances, unless in case of melancholy;) Or secondly, when persons are under a childish fright, only from some terrible outward appearance and noise, and a general notion thence arising, that there is something or other terrible, they know not what; without having in their minds the apprehension of any particular terrible truth whatsoever; of such a kind of fright I have seen very little appearance, either among old or young.

Those that are in such extremity, commonly express a great sense of their exceeding wickedness, the multitude and aggravations of their actual sins, and the dreadful pollution, enmity and perverseness of their hearts, and a dreadful obstinacy and hardness of heart; a sense of their great guilt in the sight of God; and the dreadfulness of the punishment that sin exposes to. Very often they have a lively idea of the horrible pit of eternal misery; and at the same time it appears to them, that a Great God that has them in his hands, is exceeding angry with them; his wrath appears amazingly terrible to them. God appearing to them so much provoked, and his great wrath so incensed, they are apprehensive of great danger, that he will not bear with them any longer; but will now, forthwith, cut them off, and send them down to the dreadful pit they have in view; at the same time seeing no refuge. They see more and more of the vanity of every thing they used to trust to, and flatter themselves in; till they are brought wholly to despair in all, and to see that they are at the disposal of the mere will of the God that is so angry with them. Very many, in the midst of their extremity, have been brought to an extraordinary sense of their

fully deserving that wrath and destruction, which is then before their eyes; and at the same time, that they have feared every moment, that it would be executed upon them, they have been greatly convinced that it would be altogether just that it should, and that God is indeed absolutely Sovereign. And very often, some text of Scripture expressing God's Sovereignty, has been set home upon their minds, whereby their minds have been calmed and they have been brought as it were to lie at God's foot; and after great agonies, a little before light has arisen, they have been composed and quiet, in a kind of submission to a Just and Sovereign God; but their bodily strength much spent; and sometimes their lives, to appearance almost gone; and then light has appeared, and a glorious Redeemer, with his wonderful, all-sufficient grace, has been represented to them, often, in some sweet invitation of Scripture. Sometimes the light comes in suddenly, sometimes more gradually, filling their souls with love, admiration, joy and self-abasement; drawing forth their hearts in longing after the excellent lovely Redeemer, and longings to lie in the dust before him; and longings that others might behold him, and embrace him, and be delivered by him; and longings to live to his glory: but sensible that they can do nothing of themselves; appearing vile in their own eyes, and having much of a jealousy over their own hearts. And all the appearances of a real change of heart have followed; and grace has acted, from time to time, after the same manner that it used to act in those that were converted formerly, with the like difficulties, temptations, buffetings, and like comforts; excepting that in many, light and comfort has been in higher degree than ordinary. Many very young children have been thus wrought upon. There have been some instances very much like those Demoniacs that we read

of, **Mark 1:26** and **Chapter 9:26** of whom we read, that **when the Devil had cried with a loud voice, and rent them sore, he came out of them.** And probably those instances were designed for a type of such things as these. Some have several turns of great agonies, before they are delivered: and some have been in such distresses, and it has passed off, and no deliverance at all has followed.

Some object against it, as great confusion, when there is a number together, in such circumstances, making a noise; and say, God cannot be the author of it, because he is the God of order, not of confusion. But let it be considered, what is the proper notion of confusion, but the breaking that order of things whereby they are properly disposed, and duly directed to their end, so that the order and due connection of means being broken, they fail of their end; but conviction and conversion of sinners is the obtaining the end of religious means. Not but that I think that persons that are thus extraordinarily moved should endeavour to refrain from such outward manifestations, what they well can, and should refrain to their utmost, in the time of the solemn worship. But if God is pleased to convince the consciences of persons, so that they cannot avoid great outward manifestations, even to the interrupting, and breaking off those public means they were attending, I do not think this is confusion, or an unhappy interruption, any more than if a company should meet on the field to pray for rain, and should be broken off from their exercise by a plentiful shower. Would to God that all the public assemblies in the land were broken off from their public exercises with such confusion as this the next Sabbath Day! We need not be sorry for the breaking the order of the means,

by obtaining the end to which that order is directed. He that is going a journey to fetch a treasure, need not be sorry that he is stopped by meeting the treasure in the midst of his journey.

Besides those that are overcome with conviction and distress, I have seen many of late, that have had their bodily strength taken away with a sense of the glorious excellency of the Redeemer, and the wonders of his dying love; with a very uncommon sense of their own littleness, and exceeding vileness attending it, with all expressions and appearances of the greatest abasement and abhorrence of themselves. And not only new converts, but many that were, as we hope, formerly converted, whose love and joy has been attended with a flood of tears, and a great appearance of contrition and humiliation, especially for their having lived no more to God's glory since their conversion; with a far greater sight of their vileness, and the evil of their hearts than ever they had; with an exceeding earnestness of desire to live better for the time to come, but attended with greater self-diffidence than ever. And many have been even overcome with pity to the souls of others, and longing for their salvation.

And many other things I might mention in this extraordinary work, answering to every one of those marks that have been insisted on. So that if the Apostle **John** knew how to give signs of a work of the true Spirit, this is such a work.

Providence has cast my lot in a place where the work of God has formerly been carried on. I had the happiness to be settled in that place two years with the venerable STODDARD; and was then acquainted with a number that, during that season, were wrought upon, under his ministry, and have been intimately acquainted with the experiences of many others, that were wrought upon be-

fore under his ministry, in a manner agreeable to his doctrine, and the doctrine of all orthodox divines; and of late that work has been carried on there, with very much of these uncommon operations: but it is apparent to all to be the same work, not only that was wrought there six or seven years ago, but elder Christians there know it to be the same work that was carried on there, in their former Pastor's days, though there be some new circumstances. And certainly we must throw by all the talk of conversion and Christian experience; and not only so, but we must throw by our Bibles, and give up revealed religion, if this be not in general the work of God. Not that I suppose that the degree of the influence of the Spirit of God, is to be determined by the degree of effect on men's bodies, or that those are always the best experiences, that have the greatest influence on the body.

And as to the imprudences and irregularities and mixture of delusion that have been; it is not at all to be wondered at that a reformation, after a long continued, and almost universal deadness, should at first when the revival is new, be attended with such things. In the first creation God did not make a complete world at once; but there was a great deal of imperfection, darkness, and mixture of **Chaos** and confusion, after God first said, **Let there be Light**, before the whole stood forth in perfect form. When God at first began his great work for the deliverance of his people, after their long continued bondage in **Egypt**, there were false wonders mixed with true, for a while; which hardened the unbelieving **Egyptians**, and made them to doubt of the divinity of the whole work. When the children of **Israel** first went about bringing up the Ark of God, after it had long been neglected, and had been long absent, they **sought not the Lord after the due order**, 1

Chronicles 15:13. At the time when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, **Satan came also among them.** And **Solomon's** ships when they **brought Gold and Silver and Pearls,** also brought **Apes and Peacocks.** When day light first appears, after a night of darkness, we must expect to have darkness mixed with light, for a while, and not to have perfect day, and the sun risen at once. The fruits of the earth are first green before they are ripe, and come to their proper perfection gradually; and so Christ tells us, **is the Kingdom of God.** Mark 4:26, 27, 28. **So is the Kingdom of God; as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise night and day; and the seed should spring and grow up, he knows not how: for the earth brings forth fruit of herself; first the blade; then the ear; then the full corn in the ear.**

The Imprudences and Errors that have attended this Work, are the less to be wondered at, if it be considered, that it is chiefly young Persons that have been the Subjects of it, who have less Steadiness and Experience, and are in the Heat of Youth, and much more ready to run to Extremes. Satan will keep Men secure as long as he can; but when he can do that no longer, he often endeavors to drive them to Extremes, and so to dishonor God, and wound Religion that Way. And doubtless it has been one Occasion of much of the Misconduct there has been, that in many Places, People that are the Subjects of this Work of God's Spirit, see plainly that their Ministers have an ill Opinion of the Work; and therefore with just Reason, durst not apply themselves to them as their Guides in this Work; and so are without Guides: and no Wonder that when a People are as Sheep without a Shepherd, they

wander out of the Way. A People, in such Circumstances especially, stand in great and continual Need of Guides, and their Guides stand in continual Need of much more Wisdom than they have of their own. And if a People have Ministers that favor the Work, and rejoice in it, yet it is not to be expected that, either People or Ministers should know so well how to conduct themselves in such an extraordinary State of Things, while it is new, and what they never had any Experience of before, as they may, after they have had Experience, and Time to see the Tendency, Consequences and Issue of Things. The happy Influence of Experience is very manifest at this Day, in the People among whom God has settled my Abode. The Work of God that has been carried on there this Year, has been much purer than that which was wrought there six Years before: It has seemed to be more purely spiritual; freer from natural and corrupt Mixtures, and any Thing savoring of enthusiastic Wildness and Extravagance: It has wrought more by deep Humiliation and Abasement before God and Men; and they have been much freer from Imprudences and Irregularities. And particularly there has been a remarkable Difference in this Respect, That whereas many before, in their Comforts and Rejoicings, did too much forget their Distance from God, and were ready in their Conversation together of the Things of God, and of their own Experiences, to talk with too much of an Air of Lightness, and something of Laughter; now they seem to have no Disposition to it, but rejoice with a more solemn, reverential, humble Joy; as God directs the Princes of the Earth, **Psalm 2:11**. It is not because the Joy is not as great, and in many of them much greater: There are many among us, that were wrought upon in that former Season, that have now had much greater

Communications from Heaven than they had then; but their Rejoicing operates in another Manner: it only abases and solemnizes them; breaks their Hearts, and brings them into the Dust: Now when they speak of their Joys, it is not with Laughter, but a Flood of Tears. Thus those that laughed before, weep now; and yet, by their united Testimony, their Joy is vastly purer and sweeter than that which before did more raise their animal Spirits. They are now more like **Jacob**, when God appeared to him at **Bethel**, when he saw the Ladder that reached to Heaven, and said, **How dreadful is this Place**; and like **Moses**, when God showed him his Glory on the Mount, when **he made haste, and bowed himself unto the Earth**.

2. Let us all be hence warned, **by no Means to oppose, or do any Thing, in the least to clog or hinder that Work that has lately been carried on in the Land, but on the contrary, to do our utmost to promote it**. Now Christ is come down from Heaven into this Land, in a remarkable and wonderful Work of his Spirit, it becomes all his professed Disciples to acknowledge him, and give him Honor.

The Example of the Jews in Christ's and the Apostles' Times, is enough to beget in those that do not acknowledge this Work, a great Jealousy of themselves, and to make them exceedingly cautious of what they say or do. Christ then **was in the World, and the World knew him not: He came to his own** professing People, **and his own received him not**. That coming of Christ had been much spoken of in the Prophecies of Scripture that they had in their Hands, and had been long expected, and yet because Christ came in a Manner that they did not expect, and that was not agreeable to their carnal Reason, they would not own him, but op-

posed him, counted him a Madman, and the Spirit that he wrought by the Spirit of the Devil. They stood and wondered at the great Things that were done, and knew not what to make of them; but yet they met with so many stumbling Blocks, that they finally could not acknowledge him. And when the Spirit of God came to be so wonderfully poured out in the Apostles' Days, they looked upon it to be Confusion and Distraction. They were astonished by what they saw and heard, but not convinced. And especially was the Work of God then rejected by those that were most conceited of their own Understanding and Knowledge, agreeable to Isaiah 29:14. **Therefore behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous Work amongst this People, even a marvelous Work and a Wonder; for the Wisdom of their wise Men shall perish, and the Understanding of their prudent Men shall be hid.** And many of them that had been in Reputation for Religion and Piety, had a great Spite against the Work, because they saw it tended to diminish their Honor, and to reproach their Formality and Lukewarmness. Some upon these Accounts maliciously and openly opposed and reproached the Work of the Spirit of God, and called it the Work of the Devil, against inward Conviction; and so were guilty of the unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost.

There is another Coming of Christ, a spiritual Coming, to set up his Kingdom in the World, that is as much spoken of in Scripture Prophecy, as that first Coming of Christ was, and that has been long expected by the Church of God; that we have Reason to think, from what is said of it, will be, in many Respects, parallel with the other. And certainly, that low State that the visible Church of God has lately been sunk into, is very parallel with the State of the Jewish Church, when Christ came: and therefore no Wonder at

all, that when Christ comes, his Work should appear a strange Work to most; yea, it would be a Wonder if it should be otherwise. Whether the Work that is now wrought, be the Beginning of that great Coming of Christ to set up his Kingdom, that is so much spoken of, or no; yet it is evident from what has been said, that it is a Work of the same Spirit, and of the same Nature. And there is no Reason to doubt but that, for Persons to continue long to refuse to acknowledge Christ in the Work, especially those that are set to be Teachers in his Church, will be in like Manner provoking to God, as it was in the Jews of old to refuse to acknowledge Christ; and that notwithstanding what they may plead of the great stumbling Blocks that are in the Way, and the Cause they have to doubt of the Work. The Teachers of the Jewish Church found innumerable stumbling Blocks, that were to them insuperable: there were many Things appeared in Christ, and in the Work of the Spirit after his Ascension, that were exceeding strange to them; they were assured that they had just Cause for their Scruples: Christ and his Work were to the Jews a stumbling Block: **But blessed is he**, says Christ, **whosoever shall not be offended (or stumbled) in me**. As strange and as unexpected as the Manner of Christ's Appearance was, yet he had not been long in **Judea**, working Miracles, before all those that had Opportunity to observe, and yet refused to acknowledge him, brought fearful Guilt upon themselves in the Sight of God; and Christ condemned them, that though **they could discern the Face of the Sky, and of the Earth, yet they could not discern the Signs of these Times: and why**, says he, **Even of your selves, judge ye not what is right?** Luke 12 at the latter End.

It is not to be supposed that the great JEHOVAH has bowed the Heavens and come down into this Land, and appeared here now for so long a Time, in such a glorious Work of his Power and Grace, in so extensive a Manner, in the most public Places of the Land, and almost all Parts of it, without giving such Evidences of his Presence, that great Numbers, and even many Teachers in his Church, can remain guiltless in his Sight, without ever receiving and acknowledging him, and giving him Honor, and appearing to rejoice in his gracious Presence; or without so much as once giving him Thanks for so glorious and blessed a Work of his Grace, wherein his Goodness does more appear, than if he had bestowed on us all the temporal Blessings that the World affords. A long continued Silence in such a Case is undoubtedly provoking to God; especially in Ministers: it is a secret Kind of Opposition, that really tends to hinder the Work: such silent Ministers stand in the Way of the Work of God; as Christ said of old, **He that is not with us is against us.** Those that stand wondering at this strange Work of God, not knowing what to make of it, and refusing to receive it, and ready it may be sometimes to speak contemptibly of it, as it was with the Jews of old, would do well to consider and tremble at Saint Paul's Words to them, Acts 13:40-41. **Beware therefore lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the Prophets, Behold ye Despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a Work in your Days, which you shall in no wise believe, though a Man declare it unto you.** And those that cannot believe the Work to be true, because of the extraordinary Degree and Manner of it, should consider how it was with the unbelieving Lord in **Samaria**, who said, **Behold, if the Lord would make Windows in Heaven, might this Thing be?** To

whom **Elisha** said, **Behold thou shalt see it with thine Eyes, but shall not eat thereof.** Let all to whom this Work is a Cloud and Darkness, as the Pillar of Cloud and Fire was to the **Egyptians**, take heed that it be not their Destruction, as that was theirs, while it gave Light to God's Israel.

I would pray those that quiet themselves with that, that they proceed on a Principle of Prudence, and are waiting to see what the Issue of Things will be, and what Fruits those that are the Subjects of this Work will bring forth in their Lives and Conversations, would consider, whether this will justify a long refraining from acknowledging Christ when he appears so wonderfully and graciously present in the Land. It is probable that many of those that are thus waiting, know not what they are waiting for: If they wait to see a Work of God without Difficulties and stumbling Blocks, that will be like the Fool's waiting at the River Side to have the Water all run by. A Work of God without stumbling Blocks is never to be expected: **It must needs be that Offences come.** There never yet was any great Manifestation that God made of himself to the World, without many Difficulties attending it. It is with the Works of God, as it is with the Word of God; they are full of those Things that seem strange and inconsistent and difficult to the carnal unbelieving Hearts of Men. Christ and his Work always was, and always will be a Stone of Stumbling, and Rock of Offence; a Gin and a Snare to many. The Prophet **Hosea**, in the last Chapter of his Prophecy, speaking of a glorious Revival of Religion in God's Church, when God **would be as the Dew unto Israel, and he should grow as the Lily, and cast forth his Roots as Lebanon, his Branches should spread, etc.** concludes all thus, in the last Verse, **Who is wise? and he shall un-**

derstand these Things; prudent? and he shall know them. For the Ways of the Lord are right, and the Just shall walk in them, but the Transgressors shall fall therein.

It is probable that the stumbling Blocks that now attend this Work, will in some Respects be increased, and not diminished. Particularly, we probably shall see more Instances of Apostacy and gross Iniquity among Professors. And if one Kind of stumbling Blocks are removed, it is to be expected that others will come. It is with Christ's Works, as it was with his Parables: Things that are difficult to Men's dark Minds, are ordered of purpose, for the Trial of Person's Dispositions and spiritual Sense, and that Persons of corrupt Minds, and of an unbelieving, perverse, caviling Spirit, **seeing might see and not understand.** Those that are now waiting to see the Issue of this Work, think they shall be better able to determine by and by; but they are probably, many of them, mistaken. The Jews that saw Christ's Miracles, waited to see better Evidences of his being the Messiah; they wanted a Sign from Heaven; but they waited in vain; their stumbling Blocks did not diminish, but increase; they found no End to them; and so were more and more hardened in their Unbelief. Many have been praying for that glorious Reformation spoken of in Scripture, that knew not what they have been praying for, (as it was with the Jews when they prayed for the Coming of Christ) if it should come, they would not acknowledge or receive it.

This pretended Prudence of Persons, in waiting so long before they acknowledge this Work, will probably in the End prove the greatest Imprudence, in this Respect, that hereby they will fail of any Share of so great a Blessing, and will miss the most precious Opportunity of obtaining divine Light, Grace and Comfort, and

heavenly and eternal Benefits, that ever God gave in **New England**: While the glorious Fountain is set open in so wonderful a Manner, and Multitudes flock to it, and receive a rich Supply of the Wants of their Souls, they stand at a Distance doubting and wondering, and receive nothing, and are like to continue thus till the precious Season is past.

It is to be wondered at, that those that have doubted of the Work that has been attended with such uncommon extensive Appearances, should be easy in their Doubts, without taking thorough Pains to inform themselves, by going where such Things have been to be seen, and narrowly observing them, and diligently inquiring into them; not contenting themselves only with observing two or three Instances, nor resting till they were fully informed by their own Observation. I do not doubt but that if this Course had been taken, it would have convinced all whose Minds are not shut up against Conviction, in a great Degree indeed. How greatly have they erred, who only from the uncertain Reports of others, have ventured to speak slightly of these Things? That Caution of an unbelieving Jew might teach them more Prudence, Acts 5:38, 39. **Refrain from these Men, and let them alone; for if this Counsel, or this Work be of Men, it will come to naught; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it: lest perhaps ye be found to fight against God.** Whether what has been said in this Discourse be enough to convince all that have heard it, that the Work that is now carried on in the Land, is the Work of God, or not, yet I hope that for the future, they will at least hearken to the Caution of **Gamaliel** that has been now mentioned; for the future not to oppose it, or say any Thing against it, or any Thing that has so much as an indirect Tendency to bring it into Discredit, lest they

should be found to be Opposers of the Holy Ghost. There is no Kind of Sins so hurtful and dangerous to the Souls of Men, as those that are committed against the Holy Ghost. We had better speak against God the Father, or the Son, than to speak against the Holy Spirit in his gracious Operations on the Hearts of Men: nothing will so much tend for ever to prevent our having any Benefit of his Operations in our own Souls.

If there are any that will still resolutely go on to speak contemptibly of these Things, I would beg of them to take heed that they be not guilty of the unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost. A Time when the Holy Spirit is much poured out, and Men's Lusts, Lukewarmness and Hypocrisy reproached by its powerful Operations, is the most likely Time of any whatsoever, for this Sin to be committed. If the Work goes on, it is well if among the many that show an Enmity against it, and reproach it, some be not guilty of this Sin, if none have been already. Those that maliciously oppose and reproach this Work, and call it the Work of the Devil, want but one Thing of the unpardonable Sin, and that is doing it against inward Conviction. And though some are so prudent, as now openly to oppose and reproach the Work, yet it is to be feared, at this Day when the Lord is going forth so gloriously against his Enemies, that many that are silent and inactive, especially Ministers, will bring that Curse of the Angel of the Lord upon themselves, Judges 5:23. **Curse ye Meroz, said the Angel of the Lord: curse ye bitterly the Inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the Help of the Lord, to the Help of the Lord against the Mighty.**

Since the Great God has come down from Heaven, and manifested himself in so wonderful a Manner in this Land, it is in vain for any of us to expect any other, than to be greatly affected by it in our spiritual State and Circumstances, respecting the Favour of God, one Way or the other. Those that do not become more happy by it, will become far more guilty and miserable. It is always so: such a Season that proves an **acceptable Year**, and a Time of great Grace and Favour to them that will accept it and improve it, proves a **Day of Vengeance** to others. **Isaiah** 61:2. When God sends forth his **Word** it shall not return to him void; much less his **Spirit**. When Christ was upon Earth in **Judea**, many slighted and neglected him; but it proved in the Issue to be no Matter of Indifference to them: God made all that People to feel that Christ had been among them; those that did not feel it to their Comfort, felt it to their Sorrow with a Witness. When God only sent the Prophet **Ezekiel** to the Children of Israel, he declared **that whether they would hear, or whether they would forbear, yet they should know that there had been a Prophet among them**. How much more may we suppose that when God has appeared so wonderfully in this Land, that he will make every one to know that the great Jehovah has been in **New England**.

I come now in the

Third and last Place, to apply myself to those that are the Friends of this Work, and have been Partakers of it, and are zealous to promote it. Let me earnestly exhort such **to give diligent heed to themselves to avoid all Errors and Misconduct, and whatsoever may darken and obscure the Work, and give Occasion to those that stand ready to reproach it**. The Apostle was careful **to cut off Occasion from those that de-**

sired Occasion. The same Apostle exhorts **Titus**, to maintain that strict Care and Watch over himself, that both his Preaching and Behaviour might be such as **could not be condemned; that he that was of the contrary Part might be ashamed, having no evil Thing to say of them,** Titus 2:7, 8. We had need to be wise as Serpents and harmless as Doves. It is of no small Consequence that we should at this Day behave ourselves innocently and prudently. We must expect that the great Enemy of this Work will especially try his utmost **with us;** and he will especially triumph if he can prevail against any of us, in any Thing to blind and mislead us: He knows it will do more to further his Purpose and Interest, than if he prevailed against an hundred others. We had need to watch and pray, for we are but little Children; this roaring Lion is too strong for us, and this old Serpent too subtle for us.

Humility and Self-Diffidence, and an entire Dependence on our Lord Jesus Christ, will be our best Defense. Let us therefore maintain the strictest Watch against spiritual Pride, or a being lifted up with extraordinary Experiences and Comforts, and high Favours of Heaven that any of us may have received. We had need after such Favours, in a special Manner to keep a strict and jealous Eye upon our own Hearts, lest there should arise Self-exalting Reflections upon what we have received, and high Thoughts of ourselves as being now some of the most eminent of Saints and peculiar Favourites of Heaven, and that the Secret of the Lord is especially with us, and that we above all are fit to be improved as the great Instructors and Censors of this evil Generation: And in an high Conceit of our own Wisdom and Discerning, should as it were naturally assume to ourselves the Airs of Prophets or extraordi-

nary Ambassadors of Heaven. When we have great Discoveries of God made to our Souls, we should not shine bright in our own Eyes. **Moses** when he had been conversing with God in the Mount, though his Face shone so as to dazzle the Eyes of **Aaron** and the People, yet he did not shine in his own Eyes; **he knew not that his Face shone**. Let none think themselves out of Danger of this spiritual Pride, even in their best Frames. God saw that the Apostle **Paul**, (though probably the most eminent Saint that ever lived) was not out of Danger of it, no not when he had just been conversing with God in the third Heaven: See 2 **Corinthians** 12:7. Pride is the worst Viper that is in the Heart; it is the first Sin that ever entered into the Universe, and it lies lowest of all in the Foundation of the whole Building of Sin, and is the most secret, deceitful and unsearchable in its Ways of working, of any Lust whatsoever: it is ready to mix with every Thing; and nothing is so hateful to God, and contrary to the Spirit of the Gospel, or of so dangerous Consequence; and there is no one Sin that does so much let in the Devil into the Hearts of the Saints, and expose them to his Delusions. I have seen it in many Instances, and that in eminent Saints. The Devil has come in at this Door presently after some eminent Experience and extraordinary Communion with God, and has woefully deluded and led them astray, till God has mercifully opened their Eyes and delivered them; and they themselves have afterwards been made sensible that it was Pride that betrayed them.

Some of the true Friends of the Work of God's Spirit have erred in giving too much heed to Impulses and strong Impressions on their Minds, as though they were immediate Significations from Heaven, to them, of something that should come to pass, or some-

thing that it was the Mind and Will of God that they should do, which was not signified or revealed anywhere in the Bible without those Impulses. These Impressions, if they are truly from the Spirit of God, are of a quite different Nature from the **gracious Influences** of the Spirit of God on the Hearts of the Saints; they are of the Nature of the **extraordinary Gifts** of the Spirit, and are properly **Inspiration**, such as the Prophets and Apostles, and others had of old; which the Apostle distinguishes from the Grace of the Spirit, in the 13th Chapter of the first of **Corinthians**.

One Reason why some have been ready to lay Weight on such Impulses, is an Opinion they have had, That the Glory of the approaching happy Days of the Church would partly consist in restoring those extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit: which Opinion I believe arises partly through Want of duly considering and comparing the Nature and Value of those two Kinds of Influences of the Spirit **namely** his ordinary gracious Influences, and his extraordinary Influences in Inspiration and miraculous Gifts. The former are by far the most excellent and glorious; as the Apostle largely shows in the first of **Corinthians** beginning, with the thirty-first Verse of the twelfth Chapter; speaking of the extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit, he says, **But covet earnestly the best Gifts; and yet I show you a more excellent Way.** that is a more excellent Way of the Influence of the Spirit: And then he goes on in the next Chapter, to show what that more excellent Way is, even that which is in the Grace of the Spirit, which summarily consists in **Charity**, or divine **Love**. And throughout that Chapter he shows the great Preference of that above Inspiration. God communicates himself in his own Nature more to the Soul in saving Grace in the Heart, than in all miraculous Gifts: The blessed Image of

God consists in that, and not in these: The Excellency, Happiness and Glory of the Soul, does immediately consist in that, and not in those: That is a Root that bears infinitely more excellent Fruit: Salvation and the eternal Enjoyment of God is promised to divine Grace, but not to Inspiration: A Man may have those extraordinary Gifts, and yet be abominable to God, and go to Hell: The spiritual and eternal Life of the Soul do not consist in the extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit, but the Grace of the Spirit: This, and not those, is that Influence of the Spirit of God which God bestows only on his Favorites and dear Children: He has sometimes thrown out the other to Dogs and Swine, as he did to **Balaam, Saul, and Judas**; and some that in the primitive Times of the Christian Church committed the unpardonable Sin, as **Hebrews 6**. Many wicked Men at the Day of Judgment will plead, **Have we not prophesied in thy Name, and in thy Name cast out Devils, and in thy Name done many wonderful Works**. The greatest Privilege of the Prophets and Apostles, was not their being inspired and working Miracles, but their eminent Holiness. The Grace that was in their Hearts, was a thousand Times more their Dignity and Honor, than their miraculous Gifts. The Things that we find **David** comforting himself in, in the Book of Psalms, are not his being a King, or a Prophet, but the holy Influences of the Spirit of God in his Heart, communicating to him divine Light, Love and Joy. The Apostle **Paul** abounded in Visions and Revelations and miraculous Gifts, above all the Apostles; but yet he esteems all Things but Loss for the Excellency of the spiritual Knowledge of Christ. It was not the Gifts but the Grace of the Apostles, that was the proper Evidence of their Names being written in Heaven, which Christ directs them to rejoice in, much more, than in the Devils being sub-

ject to them. To have Grace in the Heart is an higher Privilege than the blessed Virgin her self had, in having the Body of the second Person in the Trinity conceived in her Womb, by the Power of the Highest overshadowing her; Luke 11, 27, 28. **And it came to pass as he spoke these Things, a certain Woman of the Company lift up her Voice, and said unto them, Blessed is the Womb that bear thee, and the Paps that thou hast sucked! But he said, yea, rather blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it.** See also to the same Purpose, **Matthew 12. 47, etcetera**

The Influence of the Holy Spirit, or divine Charity in the Heart, is the very greatest Privilege and Glory of the highest Arch-Angel in Heaven; yea, this is the very Thing by which the Creature has Fellowship with God himself, with the Father and the Son, in their Beauty and Happiness, and are made Partakers of the divine Nature, and have Christ's Joy fulfilled in themselves.

The ordinary sanctifying Influences of the Spirit of God are the End of all extraordinary Gifts, as the Apostle shows, **Ephesians 4: 11, 12, 13.** They are good for nothing, any further than as they are subordinate to this End; they will be so far from profiting any without it, that they will only aggravate their Misery. This is as the Apostle observes, the most excellent Way of God's communicating his Spirit to his Church; it is the greatest Glory of the Church in all Ages. This Glory is what makes the State of the Church on Earth most like the State of the Church in Heaven, where Prophecy and Tongues, and other miraculous Gifts cease, and are vanished away, and God communicates his Spirit only in that more excellent Way that the Apostle speaks of, **namely Charity, or divine Love,** which never fails. Therefore the Glory of the approaching happy

State of the Church does not at all require these extraordinary Gifts. As that State of the Church will be the nearest of any to its perfect State in Heaven, so I believe it will be like it in this, that all extraordinary Gifts shall have ceased and vanished away; and all those Stars and Moon, with the reflected Light they gave in the Night, or a more dark Season, shall be swallowed up in the Sun of divine Love. The Apostle speaks of those Gifts of Inspiration as childish Things, in comparison of the Influence of the Spirit in divine Love, Things given to the Church only to support it in its Minority, till the Church should have a complete, standing Rule established, and all the ordinary Means of Grace should be settled; but as Things that should cease; as the Church advanced above its childish State, and should entirely vanish when the Church should come to the State of Manhood; which will be in the approaching glorious Times, above any other State of the Church on Earth. 1 Corinthians 13. 11. **When I was a Child, I spoke as a Child, I understood as a Child, I thought as a Child: but when I became a Man, I put away childish Things:** Compared with the three preceding Verses.

When the Apostle in this Chapter, speaks of Prophecies, Tongues and Revelations ceasing and vanishing away in the Church, when the Christian Church should be advanced from a State of Minority to a State of Manhood, he seems to have Respect to its coming to an adult State in this World as well as in Heaven; for he speaks of such an adult State, or State of Manhood, wherein those three Things, **Faith, Hope, and Charity**, should **abide** or remain after Miracles and Revelations had ceased; as you may see in the last Verse, **And now abideth (remaineth) Faith, Hope, Charity; these three.** The Apostle's Manner, of speaking here

shows an evident Reference to what he had just been saying before; and here is a manifest **Antithesis** between that **remaining** spoken of here, and that **failing, ceasing, and vanishing away**, spoken of in the eighth Verse. The Apostle had been showing how that all those Gifts of Inspiration, that were the Leading-Strings of the Christian Church in its Infancy, should vanish away, when the Church came to a State of Manhood; and when he has done, then he returns to observe, what Things remain after those had failed and ceased; and he observes that those three Things shall remain in the Church, **Faith, Hope, and Charity**: And therefore the adult State of the Church he speaks of, is the more perfect State which it shall arrive at in this World, which will be above all in that glorious State it shall be brought to in the latter Ages of the World. And this was the more properly observed to the Church of the **Corinthians**, upon two Accounts; Because the Apostle had before observed to that Church that they were in a State of Infancy, **Chapter 3. 1, 2.** And because that Church seems above all others to have abounded with miraculous Gifts. When the expected glorious State of the Church comes, the Increase of Light shall be so great, that it will in some Respect answer what is said **verse 12. of seeing Face to Face.** See **Isaiah 24. 23, and 25. 7.**

Therefore I do not expect a Restoration of these miraculous Gifts in the approaching glorious Times of the Church, nor do I desire it: It appears to me that it would add nothing to the Glory of those Times, but rather diminish from it. For my Part, I had rather enjoy the sweet Influences of the Spirit, showing Christ's spiritual divine Beauty, and infinite Grace, and dying Love, drawing forth the holy Exercises of Faith, and divine Love, and sweet Complacence, and humble Joy in God, one Quarter of an Hour,

than to have prophetic Visions and Revelations for a whole Year. It appears to me much more probable that God should give immediate Revelations to his Saints in the dark Times of Popery, than now in the Approach of the most glorious and perfect State of his Church on Earth. It does not appear to me that there is any Need of those extraordinary Gifts, to introduce this happy State, and set up the Kingdom of God through the World: I have seen so much of the Power of God in **a more excellent Way**, as to convince me that God can easily do it without.

I would therefore entreat the People of God to be very cautious how they give Heed to such Things. I have seen them fail in very many Instances; and know by Experience that Impressions being made with great Power, and upon the Minds of true Saints, yea eminent Saints; and presently after, yea in the midst of, extraordinary Exercises of Grace, and sweet Communion with God, and attended with Texts of Scripture strongly impressed on the Mind, are no sure Signs of their being Revelations from Heaven: for I have known such Impressions fail, and prove vain by the Event, in some Instances attended with all these Circumstances. I know that they that leave the sure Word of Prophecy, that God has given us to be a Light shining in a dark Place, to follow such Impressions and Impulses, leave the Guidance of the Pole Star, to follow **a Jack with a Lantern**. And no wonder therefore that sometimes they are led a dreadful Dance, and into woful Extravagancies.

And seeing Inspiration is not to be expected, let us not despise human Learning. They that say human Learning is of little or no Use in the Work of the Ministry, do not consider what they say; if they did, they would not say it. By human Learning I mean, and suppose others mean, that Improvement of that common

Knowledge which Men have, by human and outward Means. And therefore to say that human Learning is of no Use, is as much as to say that the Education of a Child, or that the common Knowledge that a grown Man has, more than a little Child, is of no Use; and so that a Child of four Years old, is as fit for a Teacher in the Church of God, with the same Degree of Grace, and capable of doing as much to advance the Kingdom of Christ, by his Instruction, as a very understanding knowing Man of thirty Years of Age. If adult Persons have greater Ability and Advantage to do Service, because they have more human Knowledge than a little Child, then doubtless if they have more human Knowledge still, with the same Degree of Grace, they would have still greater Ability and Advantage to do Service. An increase of Knowledge, without doubt, increases a Man's Advantage either to do Good or Hurt, according as he is disposed. It is too manifest to be denied, that God made great Use of human Learning in the Apostle **Paul**, as he also did in **Moses** and **Solomon**.

And if Knowledge, obtained by human Means, is not to be despised, then it will follow that the Means of obtaining it are not to be neglected, **namely** Study; and that this is of great Use in order to a Preparation for a public instructing others. And though undoubtedly, an having the Heart full of the powerful Influences of the Spirit of God, may at some Times enable Persons to speak profitably, yea very excellently, without Study; yet this will not warrant us needlessly to cast ourselves down from the Pinnacle of the Temple, depending upon it that the Angel of the Lord will bear us up, and keep us from dashing our Foot against a Stone, when there is another Way to go down, though it be not so quick. And I

would pray that **Method** in public Discourses, which tends greatly to help both the Understanding and Memory, may not be wholly neglected.

And another Thing I would beg the dear Children of God more fully to consider of, is; How far, and upon what Grounds, the Rules of the holy Scriptures will truly justify their passing Censures upon others that are professing Christians, as Hypocrites and ignorant of any Thing of real Religion. We all know that there is a **judging** and censuring of some Sort or other, that the Scripture very often, and very strictly forbids. I desire that those Rules of Scripture may be looked into, and thoroughly weighed, and that it may be considered whether or not taking it upon us to discern the State of the Soul of others, and to pass Sentence upon them as wicked Men, that are professing Christians, and of a good visible Conversation, be not really forbidden by Christ in the New Testament: If it is, then doubtless the Disciples of Christ ought to avoid it, however sufficient they may think themselves for it; or however needful, or of good Tendency, they may think it. It is plain that **that** Sort of Judging is forbidden, that God claims as his Prerogative, whatever that be. We know that there is a certain Judging of the Hearts of the Children of Men, that is often spoken of as the great Prerogative of God, and which belongs only to him; as in 1 Kings 8:39. **Forgive, and do, and give to every Man according to his Ways, whose Heart thou knowest: for thou, even thou only, knowest the Hearts of all the Children of Men.** And if we examine, we shall find that **that** Judging of Hearts that is spoken of as God's Prerogative, is not only the judging of the Aims and Disposition of Men's Hearts in particular Actions, but chiefly a judging the State of the Hearts of the Professors of Religion, with

Regard to that Profession. This will appear very manifest, by looking over the following Scriptures; 1 **Chronicles** 28:9; **Psalms** 7:9, 10, 11; **Psalms** 26 throughout; **Proverbs** 16:2 and 17:3 and 21:2; **John** 2:23, 24, 25; **Revelation** 2:22, 23. That Sort of Judging which is God's proper Prerogative, is forbidden, as Romans 14:4. **Who art thou that judgest another Man's Servant? to his own Master he standeth or falleth.** James 4:12. **There is one lawgiver that is able to save and to destroy; who art thou that judgest another?** 1 Corinthians 4:3, 4. **But with me it is a very small Thing, that I should be judged of you, or of Man's Judgment; yea I judge not mine own self; but he that judgeth me is the Lord.**

Again; Whatsoever Kind of Judging is the proper Work and Business of the Day of Judgment, is a Judging that we are forbidden, as in 1 Corinthians 4:5. **Therefore judge nothing before the Time, until the Lord come; who both will bring to Light the hidden Things of Darkness, and will make manifest the Counsels of the Hearts; and then shall every Man have Praise of God.** But to distinguish Hypocrites, that have the Form of Godliness, and the visible Conversation of godly Men, from true Saints; to separate the Sheep from Goats, is the proper Business of the Day of Judgment; yea, is represented as the main Business and End of that great Day. They therefore do greatly err that take it upon them positively to determine who are sincere, and who not, and to draw the dividing Line between true Saints and Hypocrites, and to separate between Sheep and Goats, setting the one on the Right and the other on the Left, and to distinguish and gather out the Tares from amongst the Wheat: Many of the Servants of the Owner of the Field are very ready to think them-

selves sufficient for this, and are forward to offer their Service to this End; but their Lord says **Nay, lest while ye gather up the Tares, ye root up the Wheat also. Let both grow together until the Harvest; and in the Time of the Harvest I will take Care to see a thorough Separation made;** as **Matthew 13:28, 29, 30.** Agreeably to that forementioned Prohibition of the Apostle, **1 Corinthians 4:5. Judge nothing before the Time.** In this Parable by the Servants that have the Care of the Fruit of the Field, is doubtless meant the same with the Servants that have the Care of the Fruit of the Vineyard, **Luke 20;** and those that are elsewhere represented as Servants of the Lord of the Harvest, that are appointed as Labourers in his Harvest, which we know are Ministers of the Gospel. **Now** that Parable in the 13th of **Matthew** is fulfilled; **While Men slept,** (during that long sleepy, dead Time that has been in the Church,) **the Enemy has sowed Tares;** and now is the Time **when the Blade is sprung up,** and Religion is reviving; now some of the Servants that have the Care of the Field, say, **Let us go and gather up the Tares.** I know by Experience that there is a great Aptness in Men, that think they have had some Experience of the Power of Religion, to think themselves sufficient to discern and determine the State of others' Souls, by a little Conversation with them; and Experience has taught me that it is an Error. I once did not imagine that the Heart of Man had been so unsearchable as I find it is. I am less charitable, and less uncharitable than once I was. I find more Things in wicked Men that may Counterfeit, and make a fair Show of Piety, and more Ways that the remaining Corruption of the Godly may make them appear like carnal Men, Formalists and dead Hypocrites, than once I knew of. The longer I live, the less I won-

der that God challenges it as his Prerogative to try the Hearts of the Children of Men, and has directed that this Business should be let alone **till the Harvest**. I find that God is wiser than Men. I desire to adore the Wisdom of God, and his Goodness to me and my fellow Creatures, that he has not committed this great Business into the Hands of such poor, weak, dim-sighted a Creature as I am; of so much Blindness, Pride, Partiality, Prejudice, and Deceitfulness of Heart; but has committed it into the Hands of one infinitely fitter for it, and has made it his Prerogative.

The Talk of some Persons, and the Account they give of their Experiences is exceeding satisfying, and such as forbids and banishes the least Thought of their being any other, than the precious Children of God; it obliges and as it were forces full Charity: But yet we must allow the Scriptures to stand good, that speak of every Thing in the Saint, that belongs to the spiritual and divine Life, as hidden. **Their Life** is said to be **hidden**, Colossians 3:3, 4. Their Food is the **hidden Manna**; they **have Meat to eat that others know not of; a Stranger intermeddles not with their Joys**: The Heart in which they possess their divine distinguishing Ornaments, **is the hidden Man**, and **in the Sight of God** only, 1 **Peter** 3:4. Their **new Name**, that Christ has given them, **No Man knows but he that receives it**, Revelation 2:17. **The Praise** of the true **Israelites**, **whose Circumcision is that of the Heart, is not of Men but of God**, Romans 2:29. That is; they can be certainly known and discerned to be **Israelites**, so as to have the Honour that belongs to such, only of God; as appears by the Use of the like Expression by the same Apostle, 1 **Corinthians** 4:5. Speaking there of its being God's Prerogative to

judge who are upright Christians, and that which he will do at the Day of Judgment, he adds, **and then shall every Man have Praise of God.**

The Instance of **Judas** is remarkable; who though he had been so much amongst the rest of the Disciples, who were all Persons of true Experience, yet never seemed to have entertained a Thought of his being any other than a true Disciple, till he discovered himself by his scandalous Practice.

And the Instance of **Achitophel** is also very remarkable; whom **David** did not discern, though he was so wise and holy a Man, a Person of such great Experience, and so great a Divine, and had such great Acquaintance with the Scriptures, and **knew more than all his Teachers, and more than the Ancients;** and was grown old in Experience, and was in the greatest Ripeness of his Judgment, and was a great Prophet; and though he was so intimately acquainted with **Achitophel**, he being his familiar Friend, and most intimate Companion in religious and spiritual Concerns: yet **David** not only never discovered him to be an Hypocrite, but **relied upon him** as a true Saint, thought he relished and felt his religious Discourse, it was sweet to him, and he counted him an eminent Saint; so that he made him above any other Man his Guide and Counselor in Soul Matters: but yet he was not only, no Saint, but a notoriously wicked Man, a murderous, vile Wretch. Psalm 55:11, 12, 13, 14. **Wickedness is in the midst thereof; Deceit and Guile depart not from her Streets: For it was not an Enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne it; neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me, then I would have hid myself from**

him: But it was thou, a Man mine Equal, my Guide and mine Acquaintance: We took sweet Counsel together, and walked unto the House of God in Company.

To suppose that Men have Ability and Right to determine the State of the Souls of visible Christians, and so to make an open Separation between Saints and Hypocrites, that true Saints may be of one visible Company, and Hypocrites of another, separated by a Partition that Men make, carries in it an Inconsistency: for it supposes that God has given Men Power to make another visible Church, within his visible Church; for by visible Christians, or those that are of God's visible Church, can be understood nothing else, than that Company that are Christians or Saints, visibly so; that is, that have a Right to be received as such, in the Eye of a public Charity. None can have Right to exclude any one of this visible Church, but in the Way of that regular ecclesiastical Proceeding, which God has established in his visible Church.

I beg of those that have a true Zeal for promoting this Work of God, that God has begun in the Land, well to consider these Things. I am persuaded that as many of them as have much to do with Souls, if they don't hearken to me now, yet will be of the same Mind when they have had more Experience.

And another Thing that I would entreat the zealous Friends of this glorious Work of God to avoid, is managing the Controversy with Opposers with too much Heat, and Appearance of an angry Zeal; and particularly insisting very much in public Prayer and Preaching, on the Persecution of Opposers. If their Persecution were ten Times so great as it is, methinks it would not be best to say so much about it. It becomes Christians to be like Lambs, not to be apt to complain and cry when they are hurt; to be dumb and

not open their Mouth, after the Example of our dear Redeemer; and not to be like Swine, that are apt to scream aloud when they are touched. We should not be ready presently to think and speak of Fire from Heaven, when the **Samaritans** oppose us, and won't receive us into their Villages. God's zealous Ministers would do well to think of the Direction the Apostle **Paul** gave to a zealous Minister, 2 Timothy 2:24, 25, 26. **And the Servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all Men, apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them Repentance, to the acknowledging of the Truth. And that they may recover themselves out of the Snare of the Devil, who are taken Captive by him at his Will.**

And another thing that I would humbly recommend to those that love the Lord Jesus Christ, and would advance his kingdom, is a good attendance to that excellent rule of prudence Christ has left us, Matthew 9:16, 17. **No man puts a piece of new cloth into an old garment; for that which is put in to fill it up, takes from the garment, and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles; else the bottles break, and the wine runs out, and the bottles perish. But they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.** I am afraid that the wine is now running out in some parts of this land, for want of attending to this rule. For though I believe we have confined ourselves too much to a certain stated method and form in the management of our religious affairs; which has had a tendency to cause all our religion to degenerate into mere formality; yet whatsoever has the appearance of a great innovation, that tends much to shock and surprise people's minds,

and to set them a talking and disputing, tends greatly to hinder the progress of the power of religion, by raising the opposition of some, and diverting the minds of others, and perplexing the minds of many with doubts and scruples, and causing people **to swerve** from their great business, **and turn aside to vain jangling.** Therefore that which is very much beside the common practice, unless it be a thing in its own nature of considerable importance, had better be avoided. Herein we shall follow the example of one, who had the greatest success in propagating the power of religion in the world, of any man that ever lived, that he himself gives us an account of, 1 Corinthians 9:20, 21, 22, 23. **Unto the Jews, I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews: to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law: To them that are without law, (being not without law to God, but under law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law: To the weak, became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means, save some. And this I do for the Gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.**

Finis.

THANKS FOR READING



If you spotted a typo or have feedback, the email is **sam@goodsoilapps.com** — or use the in-app feedback form in *Christian Reader*.