



T H E  
Saint's Security  
A G A I N S T  
*Seducing Spirits*



WILLIAM  
AMES

FORGOTTEN  
SERMONS



THE  
SAINT'S SECURITY  
AGAINST  
SEDUCING SPIRITS

OR,  
THE ANOINTING FROM THE HOLY ONE  
THE BEST TEACHING

DELIVERED IN A SERMON AT PAUL'S  
BEFORE THE LORD MAJOR, ALDERMEN,  
AND COMMONALTY OF THE CITY OF LONDON,  
UPON THE FIFTH OF NOVEMBER, 1651.

BY WILLIAM AMES. M. A.

SONUS VERBORUM AURES PERCUTIT, MAGISTER INTÚS EST CATHEDRAM  
IN CAELO HABET QUI CORDA DOCET.

EDITED BY  
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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE,  
JOHN KENDRICK,  
LORD MAJOR, AND THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL  
THE ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF LONDON.  
HONOURABLE AND BELOVED.

Some who have been judicious spectators of those uncharitable quarrels, which have broken forth in these latter days, amongst professors, have been ready to conclude, that either men have not understood that thing which Religion signifies, or else they have abused the name of Religion, making it serve to advance themselves, and promote some worldly design: And if they shall consider the power of unmortified lusts in the hearts of wicked men emboldened by the advantage of such general dissensions, it will not be so great a wonder to see many cast off God and holiness, as to see any keeping the faith, and cleaving unto Christ in such an hour of temptation.

One great snare, that the Devil hath laid to entangle souls, hath been, to put them upon it to call every thing into question; which hath been the more dangerous, because such enquiry doth pretend to ingenuity, and is like that Tree of Knowledge, a tree to be desired to make one wise, and certainly it is far better to be humbly and modestly inquisitive, than popishly and sottishly ignorant, for the wise man's eyes are in his head, but the fool destroys himself by a strange implicit faith, and blind obedience: But when a proud spirit shall become one of those hesitating questionists, how will he vaunt and triumph in his conceits, as if he had posed and non-plussed truth it self: When such a one is gotten into this strong hold, what will not his bold confidence dare to question?

And although he might consider that a fool may ask more questions than ten wise men can answer, yet still he persisteth in vain interrogatories; And such is the disturbance of his mind occasioned by the pride and wickedness of his heart, that let the most clear and pertinent reply be made to his demands; yet is he wholly indisposed to receive satisfaction. Thus is the poor, but proud and insulting skeptic, at once really the Devil's bonds slave, and conceitedly his own freeman.

When I was, by your Order, called to this public service, many things of this kind did press in upon me, and the greatest impression that I could perceive

my spirit was, to speak something, that, by the blessing of God, tend to the vindication of the truth of Religion, from the malicious, but frivolous affronts of profane, yet cunning men; and I could not find out a more direct means to this end, than by an appeal to the common sense of all regenerate souls, which I have done in the following discourse, according to the measure of the gift received, the effects whereof I heartily desire may be these two:

First, for ever to silence that Machiavellian blasphemy, that Religion is nothing but a political engine, and that there is no such thing indeed any where to be found. There are those in the world, who in a true spiritual sense, have heard with their ears, and seen with their eyes, and handled with their hands of the word of life; And it is to be feared, that those souls, which deny, that there is any Religion abroad, are wholly devoid of it within themselves. Religion is not a *chimaera* or notion, but a real thing in the hearts and lives of good men.

Secondly, to stir up and awaken professors, that they rest not satisfied in any outward form, without the inward life and power of Religion. Oh! be not contented to serve in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the spirit. We have raised such a dust by our disputes in lesser matters, and by our espousing such trivial quarrels, that we have almost lost our Christ, and alienated our affections from our first husband. It is time for us now to call forth that primitive spirit of love and purity, if by any means we might remove the scandal of our contentions, and exhort one another so much the more, as we see the day approaching.

After you had patiently given this Sermon the hearing, you were pleased to importune the publication thereof, whereby your selves and others might the better perpend, and truly examine what is therein contained; which request of your Honours I could not easily deny, but have accordingly performed, and do here tender it to your Christian acceptance, with hopeful confidence, that seeing for the truth's sake, it found such unexpected entertainment at your ear, it shall not be despised at the more severe tribunal of your eye.

Now, that good spirit of Jesus Christ open the eyes of your minds, that you may see and approve things that are excellent, and persuade your hearts to receive the truth in the love of it, and direct your steps to walk in the paths of mercy and truth, that you may be saved.

SO PRAYETH,  
YOURS AND THE CHURCH'S SERVANT IN THE GOSPEL,  
WILLIAM AMES

BUT YE HAVE AN UNCTION FROM THE HOLY ONE,  
AND YE KNOW ALL THINGS.

1 JOHN 2:20

There hath been of old an irreconcilable feud between light and darkness, between good and evil, and wheresoever truth hath had its dwelling, there error and falsehood have endeavoured to intrude themselves; so that no sooner was truth incarnate in the person of our Lord Jesus, but Antichrist, yea many Antichrists did arise and set themselves against it; *sed magna fuit veritas & praevalabat*, truth was great and did prevail.

But when error and falsehood did perceive that truth remained invulnerable in the person of Christ, they betake themselves to his posterity, and the seed of the serpent doth conflict and try it out with the seed of the woman; yet still the victory hath been given on the saint's side.

But such was the malice of truth's great adversary, the prince of darkness, that he would not only not lay down the chains, but that he might appear to deserve the name of Apollyon and Abaddon, he hath left no means unattempted, and hath more curiously sought out and invented how he might yet (if possible) carry the day against the truth; and to carry on his undertaking hath projected two ways eminently, whereby either to banish truth wholly out of the world, or to stop her growth and progress in the world.

The one hath been by open force and violence, to persecute the persons of those who have professed themselves to be truth's subjects; whereby he might at once make them weary of their profession, and deter and affright others from entertaining that truth which was thus persecuted in those that did profess it.

The other way hath been by secret subtlety and cunning sophistry to undermine and debase the truth, to mix his poison with God's wine, whereby he might with less difficulty either cheat the professors, and owners of it, or at least hinder the genuine and natural effect which pure truth should have upon the minds of men. But upon all the glory there hath been a protection and defence, and this defence hath been the munition of rocks.

First, that there have been violent assaults upon the persons of the Saints for

the truth's sake, I need not fetch an argument from far to demonstrate unto you: Every one that we meet withal is able to tell us of those primitive persecutions, and to relate unto us rueful stories of the bloody massacres that have been abroad.

Who amongst us is ignorant of those Smithfield Butcheries, and those whole-burnt-offerings of holy men, which the bloody priests of Rome did offer to their great idol? What shall we say to this day's rehearsal of those not invincible armadas, those powder-plots and conspiracies, those armies and insurrections, those wars and tumults, which have threatened as with open mouth, to swallow up and devour whole nations and commonwealths, where Jesus Christ hath had his worshippers?

Certainly nothing herein is so wonderful as this, that Christ hath yet a name in the world, that he hath yet a name in England. And that which hath secured truth and her subjects from the mischief of these designs hath been the powerful providence of the Almighty. He that holdeth the reins of government in his hand, who is the great and supreme Moderator of this world hath taken to himself his great power, and hath reigned. Behold, God hath been to his churches, and holy ones as a refuge from the storm, and as a shadow from the heat of their persecuting adversaries, whilst the blast of the terrible ones hath been as a storm against the wall; so that, as we have cause this day, in our anniversary commemoration of these never to be forgotten deliverances, we may take up that angelical doxology, and say, blessing, honour, glory and power, be given to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever, amen, hallelujah.

Secondly, that there hath been deceit and sophistry used to steal away truth from the professors of it, nothing is more clear and manifest. The Scripture speaketh expressly, that there were false prophets amongst the people, and there shall false teachers creep in, who shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them. And these agents or factors for truth's adversary, are either those *tenebriones & lucifugae*, those owls and night birds, who do secretly blaspheme the truth, but dare not come into the light, lest their works of darkness should be revealed and made manifest.

Or else they are those whom the Father calls *meridiani daemones*, those noon-day devils, who with an impudent forehead dare set themselves to cry down and with most devilish confidence to oppose that truth which must prevail and conquer. And these may be those white devils that would appear in the shape of angels of light, whilst indeed secretly and inwardly they are nothing else but fiends of darkness. But against all these hath our Lord Jesus secured his church and people; and hath brought off his truth without loss or prejudice; and that by the powerful working of his own spirit living in the hearts of holy men.

Now as we have cause every way to bless God for truth's safety, so from a

godly jealousy and holy fear we may admonish and call upon the professors of truth, that they be not led away with the error of the wicked, or ensnared with the craft and subtlety of Antichristian seducers; And this was the occasion of that discourse which the Apostle falls upon in this chapter, as may be gathered from the 26th verse: These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. The aged Apostle in the beginning of his discourse doth well consult the condition of believers to whom this epistle should come, and writes unto them as unto little children.

In Verse 18, little children, you, whose attainment it is to know the Father, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in him your God and Father. My little children, it is *hora novissima*, the last hour, and therefore you had need to stir up your selves, and seriously to consider, how to save your selves from that great inundation of the mystery of iniquity, which will endeavour to suppress the mystery of godliness. My little children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard formerly by those who instructed you in the truth, that Antichrist should come, so now already there be many Antichrists, for this is the last time: And the danger is greater, forasmuch as those Antichrists who are abroad were sometimes pretenders to the truth of the Gospel, sometimes they professed themselves subject unto that truth, which now they endeavour to oppose and vilify. Yet let me inform you in this, that they went out from us, but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, no doubt, they would have continued with us; but they went out, that it might be made manifest they were not all of us.

Now after he had given this alarm to Believers, concerning the approach of the Antichristian adversary, He gives himself and them a cordial and encouragement in the words which I have read, But ye have an unction from the Holy one, and ye know all things. Which words you may please to look upon as the saint's security in evil times, or the best protection of holy men against the impudent assaults of brazen-faced error, and Antichristian falsehood. In these words be pleased to observe these three things. First, A glorious title given to Jesus Christ, the King of Saints. He is called the Holy One. You have an anointing from the Holy One.

The spirits of Antichrist are unclean spirits, they are profane, debauched, polluted, and polluting spirits, but the spirit of our Lord Jesus, which is in you, proceedeth from one that is holy, harmless, and separated from sinners. This is a title often given in the Old Testament to the eternal Majesty, that uncreated Being, God himself: And our Lord Jesus, as the eternal Son of the everlasting Father, is dignified with the same title, and called the Holy child, the Holy thing, the Holy One; yea, in Daniel 9:24 he is called the *sanctum sanctorum*, the great Saint, or the most holy of all. There the Angel tells Daniel that after seventy weeks there should be a reconciliation made for iniquity, and everlasting righteousness brought in, and the most holy should be anointed: that is,



our Lord Jesus Christ, the true Messiah, should come in the flesh and be inaugurated, and installed into that great office of an High Priest, which had been for so many years past typified and shadowed out in their priest that served in the temple.

Now this is worth our consideration, that if our Lord Jesus, who is the fountain from whence we receive this spirit be so holy and pure, then surely the effects and operations that this spirit doth produce in those who receive it, must be holy and pure also. Impurity, uncleanness, and sinful defilements cannot possibly proceed from so pure a spirit as the spirit of Jesus Christ is, whose name is, the Holy One. Secondly, Another thing considerable in the words is, an effusion of the Holy Ghost from Jesus Christ upon his people. Ye have an unction, or ye have received the anointing. The custom of anointing was anciently used either to separate and consecrate to an holy use, or to install and inaugurate to some office and service, or to endow with gifts suitable to some notable and eminent employment, and we find in the Scriptures that the anointing passed upon some of their Prophets, their Priests, and their Kings.

It is also further observed, that in the second temple, the anointing, or the holy ointment was wanting, which might signify to the Jews that then were, that their ceremonial rites were beginning to waste, they should therefore long for, and earnestly desire the Messiah's coming, by whom that anointing and other things should be supplied and restored in a more singular and eminent way. Our Lord Jesus as our High Priest was anointed; and from him do all his people as so many inferior priests, receive and participate of that anointing: for as it is observed, the High Priest of old had most oil poured upon his head, and the other priests were but sprinkled with that holy oil. So then the meaning of this anointing which is poured out from Christ upon his people must needs signify a communication of the same spirit, of the same life, of the same grace and nature, that Jesus Christ, as the Chief Priest, was anointed withal from the Father: so that the same disposition and goodness of mind doth flow out from Christ to a gracious soul.

Thirdly, Here is the great benefit that Believers do receive by this holy anointing, which they have from the Holy One, and that is, That they know all things. You have an unction from the holy one, and ye know all things. There is some difference in the reading of these words; the Syriac translator reads them thus, ye know all men; and in that sense they may refer to that which the Apostle Paul speaks of in 1 Corinthians 12:10, where, amongst the gifts of the spirit, which he reckoneth up, this is one, namely the discerning of spirits. And the truth is, this great gift of discerning men's spirits was more especially given to some than unto others in the primitive times, and they were able not only probably to conjecture, but also to give a judgement concerning many with

whom they conversed, and did thereby discover divers hollow and false-hearted hypocrites: which gift may, peradventure, though in a smaller measure and lower degree, live even to this day in the hearts of holy men; for verily, they many times do give a very shrewd conjecture, not to say judgement, concerning professors amongst whom they live; but this they do with a sober, modest and compassionate spirit.

As for profane monsters, and notorious sinners, their condition is obvious, and easily to be discerned, by men whose eyes are in their heads, who are not blinded with a bride of favour, or prejudiced with some fond and passionate affection. But all the Greek copies, as is observed, do read the words as we translate them. Ye know all things; that is, all those main, necessary, and fundamental truths, which Jesus Christ came to declare, as from the Father to the world; or ye know all things, that is, all those truths of the gospel which those Antichrists that now are, or that great Antichrist which shall come, will set themselves to oppose and contradict. You, who have this anointing do most certainly and assuredly know, and are well established in these principal and capital truths which you have received by virtue of this anointing.

Thus we have a brief account of these words presented to us: And the point that I shall discourse upon, with your Christian patience is this. That the most certain and assured knowledge of Christian doctrine is attained unto by a participation of the anointing of Jesus Christ. Ye have received such an unction, and thereby it is that ye know all things. Every man almost, in these days, thinks himself well instructed in his profession that he makes, and in the Articles of Faith whereunto he declareth himself to be a servant: who is there that doth not judge himself to be as a master of Israel; well understood in all points of theology, who yet, like Nicodemus, remaineth in the very darkness of ignorance, as not knowing what regeneration and the new birth might signify: for we shall find that there is no such certain and infallible way to come to the knowledge of heavenly truths, as by receiving an unction from Jesus Christ.

When Job's three friends had spent much time in arguing and rearguing the case with Job, Elihu standeth up and speaketh after this manner. I did expect that days should have taught wisdom, and that I should have found understanding in the multitude of years, but now I find, there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding; great men are not always wise, neither do the aged understand judgement; I find a great difference between the judgement that these men, though grave seniors, give concerning Job's case, and the judgement that the spirit of God giveth: the censure of these men proceedeth from the peevish, angry spirits of men, but the judgement of the divine Spirit in this case is according to truth.

But that notable Scripture which I shall briefly speak unto is in 1 Corinthians 2:13-14.

WHICH THINGS ALSO WE SPEAK, NOT IN THE WORDS WHICH  
MAN'S WISDOM TEACHETH, BUT WHICH THE HOLY GHOST  
TEACHETH; COMPARING SPIRITUAL THINGS WITH SPIRITUAL.  
BUT THE NATURAL MAN RECEIVETH NOT THE THINGS OF  
THE SPIRIT OF GOD: FOR THEY ARE FOOLISHNESS UNTO HIM:  
NEITHER CAN HE KNOW THEM, BECAUSE THEY ARE  
SPIRITUALLY DISCERNED.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:13-14

Here the Apostle speaking of this very subject, telleth us of many things: That which is the *substratum*, the main business of his discourse, are the things of the spirit; then he tells us of a natural man and a spiritual man; then he speaks of the spirit of the world, the spirit of God, and the mind of Christ; and then he compares all these together, and bringeth forth thus much, namely, That the spirit of the world, the spirit of a natural man, which is a mundane, worldly spirit, cannot receive the things of the spirit of God, for they are spiritually discerned, and only they can know them, who have the same spirit living and dwelling in their souls, which Jesus Christ had dwelling in him having received it from the Father; We have the mind, and spirit of God, and hereby do we know the things of the Spirit. That I may the more clearly manifest, to this great Assembly, what my understanding is in this weighty matter, give me leave to preface four particulars, which may prevent mistakes, as if any private or particular design were aimed at in such a doctrine as this.

First, man as a reasonable creature is the subject of Christian doctrine. Man doth not throw away his mind and understanding when he comes to be proselyted into the truths of Christ. When God undertaketh to inform a man with heavenly doctrine, he doth not deal with him as he would deal with a stone which he would raise up to be a child to Abraham, for he findeth man already endowed with a mind and will, upon which account he is capable to hear further from his God. Man's understanding is of very good use in Christian Religion; for by that is man able to communicate much of his sense in heavenly things unto others, as also to plead for, and by argument to back the truth

received, against the cavils and contradictions of such as oppose themselves.

I must confess freely what I apprehend, that, in the moment of a man's conversion, when the grace of God powerfully seizes upon his spirit to turn him from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, those acts that he doth then perform, are the most rational acts that ever he did perform in all his life. The acts of repentance, faith and self-denial, the act of turning from sin unto God, which are the acts that appear in the first motion of the soul unto God, these are in themselves and to the soul, most reasonable, equitable, just and right; yea, in the further progress of the grace of God in man's mind, when it grows up into sanctification and holiness, the understanding of a man doth act and acteth understandingly. The truth is, this mind and understanding of a man is, as the great philosopher calls it, the very flower of a man's soul, which is not blasted and withered by the truths of the Gospel, but it is thereby reformed, rectified, repaired and restored to its youthful perfection, with great advantage. So that I think, in a sober sense, what the Apostle speaks of the Law, that it is, a school-master to Christ, may be said of man's natural knowledge, and understanding: in which sense one of the ancients calleth true philosophy, an inferior school, or a fore-teaching to Christ, as it is that which renders a man capable and fit to receive the impressions of a divine spirit: for certainly a man in his wits, and not a mad, distracted man, is the subject of God's grace, of his converting and sanctifying grace.

Secondly, The written word of God, in the Scriptures of Truth, is the only outward rule of faith and manners. This is the *norma fidei & morum*; According to this rule must every man order his conversation, Isaiah 8:20. To the Law and to the Testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because they have not so much as morning-light in them. This is the royal standard of truth, unto which we must bring all men's *dogmata*, their assertions, and opinions, which are vended for truth in the world. Hereby may we examine, and judge of all that, which men would obtrude upon us. I recommend, to every one that hears me, the constant studying of the holy Scriptures, as being the oracles of God. It was that, for which, the Holy Ghost doth so highly commend the Berean Christians, That they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so; and upon this account they were called more noble, as being better born, better bred; better educated then those of Thessalonica. I will only add this, that the letter of the Scriptures is but dead without a divine power joined with it, and a spirit, moving man's mind, without a word, is very questionable and dangerous.

Thirdly, The Holy Spirit, which is understood by this anointing, is no private spirit, or particular impulse, no singular persuasion or extraordinary inspiration, but a general and universal sense in all regenerate minds. Holy men do all agree, by common consent, in those truths, which the new creature doth chiefly resent and relish.

The Apostle to this purpose useth two expressions in 1 Corinthians 12:13 and 2 Corinthians 4:13. By one spirit are we all baptized into one body, and have been all made to drink into one spirit: and we have the same spirit of faith. Where the Apostle considers the community of Christians, under the notion of a body made up of several members, which must have a soul and spirit to inform, animate, quicken and enliven it. This is that spirit of Jesus Christ which doth live in the souls of holy men; and distinguish them from the common herd of infidels and beastly sinners.

Although we may be ignorant of that which the philosophers meant by their *anima mundi*; the soul of the world, yet methinks every gracious heart should easily apprehend what is that spirit and soul of the regenerate world. But here I must acknowledge also, that the eternal spirit of God doth sometimes come down as from heaven, and particularly move upon a regenerate mind, whereby it doth blow off the ashes and stir up those heavenly sparks, which lay in the soul as buried under some clouds of sadness, and hereby the frozen and benumbed spirit of a precious saint doth find itself thawed into a vivacious fitness for any service.

This is that which the spouse calls for in Song of Solomon 4:16. Awake O north wind, and come thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. This discourse, I conceive, may shew us the difference between the good spirit of God, which sober minds converse withal, and that fanatic and ecstatic spirit, which vain men pretend unto, and are deluded with. This spirit, in both the senses that we have spoken of may not be condemned as a groundless enthusiasm, for as the learned Cameron observes, *Enthusiasmus est, ubi quis est merum organum, sine omni usurationis & judicii*. Then is a man acted by such a spirit, when he uttereth revelations without the use of his understanding and reason, as sometimes the prophets of old did, who were but as a trunk or instrument through which the spirit conveyed those secrets, which God would declare unto the world.

Fourthly, The spirit of Christ signified by this anointing, is first received in the way of his ordinances, and is thereby maintained and carried on, and doth live with great delight in the use of those ordinances where it was first received. He who hath received the anointing from the Holy One, knows where he hath received it, and he knows also, that the same spirit can breath no where so freely, as in such holy air. The new creature was born under the ordinances of the Gospel, and is nursed and brought up under them. Faith came first by hearing, and faith groweth and receiveth strength, being nourished by the same doctrine, by which it was at first planted. They who have heard and learned of the Father come unto Christ, and know not whether to go from him, because he hath the words of eternal life.

The Apostle in 2 Corinthians 3:8 calleth the ministration of the Gospel the

ministration of the spirit, as being that by which the soul doth receive, and grow up in this divine and heavenly life. Therefore the author of 1 John, writing to anointed ones, tells them that as they had heard so it should be that Antichrist would come, and that they should abide in the truth; whereby he doth commend them and their teachers for their great care and diligence in searching out and receiving the truth. I need not spend time in shewing the lawfulness, conveniency, and necessity of gospel ordinances, such as are, hearing the word, prayer, breaking of bread, to shew forth the Lord's death, and the rest which are of the like institution.

Only this I would speak by way of admonition, as it is a serious and general observation which holy men have made, that no sooner do men cast off the use of the ordinances and appointments of Jesus Christ, but at the same time they do cast off God and godliness, and laying the reins upon their own necks, they set the foot upon the holy Law, running desperately upon further mischief. Thus hath divine justice branded those who would not humbly submit to such sacred Institutions. Such is the majesty and authority of these things, that almost every man in the use of them doth find an awe upon his conscience, and feel himself commanded into a moderate and sober modesty, a modest sobriety and moderation.

## THE DOCTRINE OPENED

**H**aving thus laid down these four particulars by way of prevention, give me leave to explain the sense of the doctrine in these seven following propositions. First, The Lord Jesus as head of his Church was first anointed with the divine spirit. Here began this holy unction; Jesus Christ was the first receiver of the Spirit. The eternal spirit poured forth an abundance of this ointment upon the person of our Lord Jesus, he was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows. In the ancient anointings, God had appointed certain measures of this oil to be spent upon the persons anointed. Saul was anointed with a cruise of oil, as not like to continue in the throne long; David was anointed with a horn of oil, his kingdom being to remain longer.

But it pleased the Father that in Jesus Christ should all fulness dwell, so that in Isaiah 10 he is called the anointing; and such is the savour of his good ointments that his name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love him. The Lord Jesus did receive this fulness for our sakes, that from it we might receive, and grace for grace. He was to be the head of his Church, *propter eminentiam & influentiam*, not only for superiority, but also for influence and conveyance, so that upon this account he was first considered in the business of anointing, that he might be useful for conveyance of this spirit to his people. The ointment poured upon the head of the high priest ran down upon his beard, and to the skirts of his clothing, leaving a sweet fragrance and savour behind it: so doth this spirit of our Lord Jesus, flow from him, down to all his saints, and perfumes them with his own sweetness. And as the prophet Elijah, when he went to heaven, let his mantle and spirit fall upon Elisha: so did our blessed Lord and Saviour, after his ascension, send forth his own spirit to dwell with his disciples, as their solace, and comfort, in his necessary absence.

Secondly, Jesus Christ as a second Adam doth beget children after his own image. The first Adam brought forth children in his own likeness, deriving to them the same natural spirit which was in himself: so doth the second Adam propagate his posterity, and give unto them his own spirit which is supernatural and heavenly. The picture doth not so exactly resemble the face, as the regenerate soul doth resemble her everlasting Father.

This notion lieth very obvious in the 5th chapter of the epistle to the Romans.

Where the Apostle discourseth of the two Adams and their two posterities, with their several advantages, or prejudices that they received from their head: As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and death passed upon all, for as much as all have sinned: which words refer to the whole posterity of the first Adam: so by one man came life, by one came forgiveness, by one came such a universal reparation; that as in Adam all died, so in Christ all are made alive; all the posterity of the second Adam are as much, yea more advantaged by their Head Jesus Christ; then all the posterity of the first Adam were damnified by his apostacy, and the influence that it had upon them. The Lord Jesus finds the children of the first Adam in their natural capacity, and maketh them the subjects of his grace, but he bringeth forth upon their minds and spirits a new creation, which he did not find in them, no not in *semine*, not in the seeds or root of it. He cometh by his spirit to do some thing in man, which could not be done by the sublimation or improvement of those *rudera naturae*, those relics and remainders of shipwrecked nature.

For if so, then what meaneth that bitter cup, what meant that pomp of bloody sufferings, which Jesus Christ did undergo? What need was there that he should come endowed with so much spirit? If natural principles, which yet remain in the broken posterity of the first Adam, could have brought forth that which now is the great design and undertaking of Christ in the world. He seemeth to have come in the flesh, and to have suffered such contradiction of sinners, and so shameful, accursed death upon the cross upon too small and too inferior account. Doth Jesus Christ, after all this, effect no more upon men, than what the scattered pieces of decayed nature being gathered together, could effect upon them? Surely, Brethren, he doth more than so, for he begets children unto himself as a Father, and uniteth members unto himself as an Head, he transplanteth souls into an other soil, and they live in him, deriving sap and spirit from him as from their better soil, their new root.

The Apostle in Galatians 4 doth thus express it: My little children, with whom I travail in birth, until Christ be formed in you; that is, until the spirit of our Lord Jesus comes to be that to your souls, which your souls are unto your bodies. The reasonable soul in man is the principle of life, and that by which he is denominated to be a man, and distinguished from a beast, so doth the spirit of Christ working it self into the soul of man, transform him into his own image, and this new creature hath the same spirit, nature and disposition with Jesus Christ, whereby he is denominated a Christian, and distinguished from other men.

The person of Jesus Christ was that original copy, according to which all his posterity should be made conformable. This is that which the Apostle speaks to in 1 Corinthians 15, where he saith, as we have born the image of the earthly, so must we bear the image of the heavenly Adam; which is not only to be understood in a corporeal sense, that our bodies in the resurrection shall be



called out of their dust into the likeness of Christ's glorified body, but in a spiritual sense also, for our minds and souls having received the first fruits of the resurrection within themselves already, they also shall in union with their bodies rise up in a complete similitude and likeness to our Lord Jesus, having limb for limb, grace for grace.

Thirdly, The spirit and life of Christ communicated to his people, doth make them capable and able to understand his will. When the spirit of regeneration is past upon the soul, then doth a man become fit to understand heavenly truths. It is true, there is a kind of rational assent to heavenly truths before conversion, and the natural man doth understand the letter of the spirit, but not the spirit of the letter; yet no man hath so clear, so full and undoubted understanding of those things as he whose mind is purged from the dregs of worldly lusts, which are like a fog and mist upon the face of the soul.

The souls of men are like so many glasses, which reflect the image of things presented before them, now if there be a steam breathed upon the glass, the reflection is very little, or none at all; or if the light, which should convey the species from the object to the glass, be but a dim twilight, a weak and insufficient light, there is no reflection neither; so it is with the souls of men, whilst our worldly affections, and adulterate love to sin and wickedness, do boil and bubble up within us, sending up their steams into our minds, the things of God cannot be seen, according to the greatness of that beauty and excellency which is upon them. He that caused the light to shine out of darkness, must shine in our hearts, to give that light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; for as the Psalmist speaks: *in tuo lumine lumen videbimus*, in thy light we shall see light.

The holy nature of Jesus Christ is the true *collyrium*, the true eye salve, whereby the soul must be cured of its blindness; and the Apostle speaks in Colossians 3:10 of putting on the new man, which is renewed into knowledge, according to the image of him that created him. Until we be renewed in the spirit of our minds, and taken off from the love of this world, and the things thereof, we cannot attain to a right New Testament knowledge of those things, which Christ hath revealed from the bosom of the Father. There is a *praeputium cordis*, a foreskin of the heart, a pride and insolency of the natural spirit, which must be circumcised and destroyed, before the soul can attain unto a full view of that excellent and glorious truth, which Jesus Christ doth present us withal.

Fourthly, The knowledge of Christian doctrine grounded only upon argument is but doubtful and uncertain knowledge. I conceive, that syllogisms and arguments are only for this world, and the things of this world, but not for the things of God and of the other world. The natural philosopher attains to his natural knowledge by observations and experiments in several particulars, by

antecedents and consequents, and most of his knowledge in those things is very feeble, crazy and questionable, which made that great philosopher after all his inquiry for knowledge, profess, that he only attained to this: that he knew himself to be ignorant, *hoc tantum scio quod nihil scio*, this only do I know, that I know nothing. But God hath ordained a better way to convey his truth into our hearts, and that is by a renovation of our minds, and by the communication of a divine nature. God hath not left his people at uncertainties in those things which are material and necessary, but hath given them more than the certainty of a demonstration.

Whatsoever I do receive for truth upon the account of argumentative conclusions, that I am bound to lay aside and disown for error upon the like account, when a more probable argument comes. And truly friends, if all the ground of our entertaining Christ and truth, or Christian doctrine, be because such an argument conveyed it unto us, what shall become of us and the truth, when we meet with a subtle sophister and Antichristian head, who shall frame an argument against the truth, unanswerable by our logic? Where shall a man ever consist, if he must live upon these terms in the world? Besides, every one to whom the gospel of Christ is preached, hath not an head strong enough to grapple with the bigness and depth of some kind of arguments, who yet may have their hearts truly mortified to this world, and carried out in love to the person and nature of our Lord Jesus.

The ground of that ancient scepticism, and that of the academics, whereby they did assert that nothing could be comprehended, might be this: all their knowledge was derived unto them by probable conclusions, so that no thing was certainly and eternally true and infallible, but conjectural and probable only, and to be entertained according to the retinue and pomp of well dressed arguments. He that is but an argumentative Christian, is rather a skeptic, than a true Christian. He is a Christian at the greatest uncertainty in the world. I must confess, many notions which are obtruded upon men as orthodoxal, and contended for by others as principal pieces of theology, must be soberly examined by Scripture and reason, for they are not *per senota*, they are not seen by their own light, and in such opinions, modesty and sobriety are highly commendable. Yea, I confess further, that the heavenly principles of the New Creature may be backed and strengthened by rational arguments, and many times, the soul is constrained by a practical syllogism to be less disquieted within it self; but yet, the most clear evidence, and assurance of the truth and goodness in these holy things of Christ and the new creature, ariseth out of themselves, as light floweth from the body of the sun, without the contusion or compulsion of an harsh argument. Yea, and a regenerate heart doth by an holy sympathy, entertain with infinite delight these precious and holy truths.

Arguments and syllogisms do make a great noise in the world; me think, they are not unlike to that appearance in Horeb unto the Prophet Elijah, when the

great and strong wind rept the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks, but it is said, the Lord was not in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but he was in the still, small voice. *Lux spiritus sancti est lenis lux, perfundens se mentibus.* The Holy spirit doth gently hover over the soul, and brood upon it, Heavenly doctrine falleth down upon the spirits of men, not like a mighty violent rain, but like a shower of oil, like a sweet honey-dew.

Fifthly, The inward sense of a regenerate mind, doth easily judge between Christ and Antichrist. Such holy souls are well resolved about the things of God, they do not halt between God and Baal, arguing themselves out of all religion and modesty, but they have a natural tendency towards these things, and they feel a magnetic virtue secretly over-power them. This is the natural working of the new creature, whereby the soul doth inwardly savour and relish, difference and distinguish between the doctrines of Christ, and the impostures of Antichrist. Jesus Christ tells us in John 10 that his sheep do hear his voice; but they will not follow a stranger, for they know not the voice of strangers. Whereby he would have us to understand, that all his disciples, who are truly taught of him, do carry within themselves the *lapis lydius*, the touch-stone of truth, and such is the present touch or taste that some things do make upon their spirits, that they do easily discern from whence they come, although they do not bring them to an external judicatory.

The divine nature whereof we are made partakers, doth put a difference between that which is really and truly heavenly, and that which is only counterfeit stuff, as the touchstone doth between gold and copper. It is worthy of our observation, that every life doth attract and concoct that which is suitable to its nature, and the most inferior life hath such a faculty. The plants of the earth do draw unto themselves that sap and juice which is proper for them, and do digest it into nourishment; The beasts of the field do naturally move towards those things which will maintain their lives, and turn aside from that which is poisonous and destructive to them, and what is by them received, they turn in *succum and sanguinem*, into food and nourishment, and do grow thereby.

The rational life in a natural man doth by observation, argument, and dispute, gather up natural truths, whereby the man becomes well polished in his understanding, and may deserve the name of an instructed philosopher, so doth that spiritual and heavenly life, which we call the new creature, and divine nature in a Christian. It, being indued with such an attractive and digestive faculty, doth know what is suitable or unsuitable to it self, and doth accordingly affect or dis-relish it. The needle touched with a loadstone doth not more naturally move towards the pole, then a soul touched with a divine spirit, doth move towards and freely embrace the truths of Christ. It cannot rest at any point in the compass until it be centered there.

Men in whom the spirit of this world lives, and is predominant, do naturally

affect worldly things, the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life. He that loveth profit, is wholly taken up in getting wealth. He that loveth honour and popular applause, doth set himself to please men. He that loveth pleasures, studieth excess, riot, wantonness, and dalliance, and all these do find their spirits move with a kind of naturalness towards such things, and take wonderful contentment in them, so that as the Apostle speaks, These men are lovers of pleasure, lovers of money, rather than lovers of God. The spirit of Jesus Christ, in the hearts of holy men, doth, with savour and relish, entertain the things of God, whilst other men that have but common spirits, cannot take any delight or complacency in them. Such was the hearty and sincere affection of Timothy towards the Philippians, that Saint Paul saith, there was none like him, who did, naturally take care of their affairs. And it is much more true of a regenerate heart; for none attain to such a discretion in heavenly truths as it self attaineth unto, for unto a man void of such a life, those precious truths are like the white of an egg, without any savour.

Sixthly, The true knowledge of heavenly things increaseth according to the measure of sanctification. I do not speak of knowledge falsely so called, as the Apostle some where terms it, but of true knowledge, that is, inward, experimental understanding, and this grows up as holiness doth enlarge it self in the soul. The clearer the glass, the more perfect is the reflection that it makes. The more pure and spotless the soul is, the better doth it receive and judge of heavenly things. If it be but day-break, or a dim and dusky twilight, we have a more doubtful appearance of things that are before us: but if it grows to a morning-light, and once increaseth into a noon-day brightness, then have we a more exact and judicious vision of them. When the soul begins at first to turn unto God, it hath some taste or smattering of these spiritual dainties, and it is like that taste, which new-born babes have of the milk which they suck from the breasts, but when the Christian follows on to know the Lord, whose going forth is prepared as the morning, and when he doth resolvedly and strongly carry on the work of sanctification in his heart and life, then doth he come to a more mature and ripened judgement of these things; He was a child before, but now he is grown up to a strong man in Christ. The great Apostle tells us, when he was a child, he thought as a child. He understood as a child, but when he became a man, he put away childish things. His apprehensions of truth were but low and weak, because his capacity was not great, but now he looks upon the brighter face of truth with greater complacency than he did before.

Our Lord Jesus tells us in John 7:17, if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God. The best way to know assuredly and impregnably the truth of those things which God speaketh in his word, is to observe and obey those things which God enjoins. The Holy Ghost, which is the best witness of Jesus Christ and his doctrine, is given to them that obey him, Acts 5:32, and these men do sweetly rest in an assurance of the truth, whilst

others who are of impure spirits do quarrel and snarl against it.

He that would grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, let him grow in grace, as the Apostle exhorts in 2 Peter 3:18. One that is newly entered into the School of Christ, doth find it a hard and difficult task, to subdue every corruption. The sins of education, custom, and natural tendency, are not easily mastered. Hence it comes to pass, that upon any laps, or fall into any particular sin, the soul begins to be haunted with scrupulosities, doubts, and fears. Yea, it doth upon such occasions fall to question the truth of grace, and the certainty of the gospel, whereas, in case of a constant and close walking with God, there be no such clouds arising, but a constant serenity upon the face of the soul.

The truth is, all those secret suspicions, and jealousies concerning the certainty of the ways of Christ, or of the work of his grace upon our hearts, do proceed from some guilt contracted by acts of violence against the light and principles of the new creature. Would you then be perfect in and assured of the truths of the gospel, take the Apostle's counsel, put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Seventhly, The holy anointing in a regenerate soul will remain without pollution by Antichristian falsehood. This anointing which ye have received abideth in you, and as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him; so saith our Apostle in 1 John 2:27, as also Paul, in 2 Corinthians 1:21, shews the ground of a soul's establishment in the truth to be this holy unction, this participation of the divine nature from God. He that establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God. Such a soul can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.

They who are persuaded into an orthodox opinion, or article of faith, by an human argument, may again be easily cheated of that opinion by that that dice-play of men, when some cunning antagonist shall cog an argument which may seem to import a fairer probability. But he, that hath this inward light of the life of Christ, as his guide into the knowledge of holy things, is not easily removed from the truth, or much affrighted with the terror of arguments, but shall hold his own for ever.

Children and fools may exchange their gold for counters, but the wise man's eyes are in his head, and he will not part with his most precious faith upon such easy terms. This true knowledge of God, and spirit of Christ in the soul, is that immortal seed, that eternal life, which shall never die. He that hath said, touch not mine anointed, will suffer none to lay violent hands upon his tender offspring; and in case of any impudent assault or bold affront offered to his sacred image, it shall appear that he who is in a renewed mind is greater then he that is in the world. This holy anointing, this new creation in the soul, is a principle of recovery in case of some particular apostacy, and may be signified by that voice behind one, which the prophet Isaiah speaks of, which shall say,

this is the way, walk in it, when he turneth to the right hand, and when he turneth to the left.

Suppose a man having received this anointing, should, at any time, by a sudden temptation, defile himself with sin, whereby his glory is stained, his spirit disquieted, his conscience wounded, and his peace interrupted, he shall find such secret struggling and strivings within himself, that he is never quiet until his filthiness be washed off, and the new creature within him restored to former freedom.

Upon this account the spirit of Christ is an holy unction; for as oil will not easily mix with other liquors, or incorporate with other bodies, so this divine spirit will preserve it self pure, and hate the very garment spotted with the flesh. An holy soul is like a fountain, or well spring of water, into which there may be thrown dirt and trash, but the fountain will still be cleansing itself, and purging out that filth which was cast into it. The spirit of Jesus Christ dwelling thus in the soul will continually be working out of all darkness, and leading it on from light to light.

Thus have we opened the doctrine unto you, and made it manifest, That the most certain knowledge of heavenly truths, ariseth from the anointing of Christ's spirit within the soul, and not from outward arguments. The spirit of God doth convey these truths into the soul, the new creature doth resent them, and this anointing doth establish the soul in a certain assurance of them.

## THE DOCTRINE APPLIED

Now by way of application, give me leave to speak briefly to some few corollaries or deductions which flow naturally from this notion which hath been thus explained.

First, If the new creature brought forth in the soul, by the spirit of regeneration, be that which teacheth the certain knowledge of Christian doctrine, then here we may see what is the true meaning of that spirit of Christ, which he hath so universally promised to bestow upon his people. The Old and New Testament is full of promises in this kind. All thy people shall be taught of God. A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes. I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, I will put my laws into their mind, and write them upon their hearts, and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord, as if they were ignorant of him, or unacquainted with him, for they shall all know me, from the least to the greatest, and this spirit, which I will pour out upon my servants, and mine handmaids, shall lead them into all truth.

Now all these, and the like glorious promises, do signify unto us that experimental knowledge of God and truth, which is the proper effect of this renovation of mind which hath been set before us. When the soul is born again of that incorruptible seed, and transplanted into our Lord Jesus, as into a new root, partaking of his sap and spirit, then doth it attain to a more clear understanding of the will of God, and hath a more perfect savour, and relish of Christ and his ways. This holy Spirit is that true *shechenah*, that indwelling of God in the soul, which was anciently shadowed out by that cloud of presence, which sat between the cherubim's wings in Solomon's temple.

Then are we indeed taught of God, when this spirit dwells within us. Then are we under the fulfilling of these promises, when we have received the truth, not as it comes from Paul, or as it is delivered by Apollo, but the truth as it is in Jesus; when the spirit of truth doth make us to know not the word, but the power of it, implanting the mind of Christ in our minds, and turning of us from the ways of sin, into the love of God. I do not here determine what those larger measures, or higher degrees of this teaching may be, in the latter days,

when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters do the sea.

Secondly, If the best way to a certainty of knowledge in heavenly things be by a spiritual anointing, then proud man must be humbled and be willing to be taught by a divine spirit. Flesh and blood cannot reveal unto man the things of the spirit, neither can any man call Jesus the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost, for the flesh profiteth nothing, it is the spirit that quickeneth, and these things they are spirit, and they are life. All things that Jesus Christ spake, and did, they were spoken in parables, and done in parables to those that are without; that hearing they might hear and not understand, and seeing they might see and not perceive: but to his disciples he saith, unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom, unto you these things are revealed from the Father. The Apostle tells us in 2 Corinthians 10:5 that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of those strong holds, and reasonings, those insulting notions that lift up themselves against Jesus Christ. After all the inquisition that our carnal reason can make into the scriptures of truth, to find out articles of faith: we shall still remain unsatisfied, and may perceive that we are still ready secretly to ask the same question that Pilate did, what is truth? Many men do sometimes think that they thoroughly understand spiritual truths, when, alas! All their knowledge amounteth to nothing more, than a zealous or passionate arguing for them.

The whole Bible to a reasonable man, not regenerated, will be, as that book was which the Prophet speaks of when it was delivered to the learned to read it, he returns it, and saith, I cannot, for it is sealed; and when it was delivered into the hands of the unlearned to read it, he saith, I am not learned. We carry Bibles in our hands; and say, we study the word of God, we do well, but until we have a spirit from God teaching of us inwardly, and reforming us according to the tenor of that word, we shall be no great proficients in that knowledge. Hence it is that in the 19th verse of the epistle of Jude, one that hath not the spirit, and one that is sensual, are accounted to be the same person, sensual, not having the spirit. The truth is, vain man would be wise, though he be like a wild asses colt. Men would not only be masters of reason, and natural knowledge, but would also have dominion over other men's faith, and would subdue the spiritual sense of the new creature to the sovereignty and supremacy of human arguments.

But as the Apostle speaks, where is the wise? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? These men indeed, be those that would seem to be wise; but is it not with them as the Apostle speaks in Romans 1:21? Are they not become dark, and vain in their imaginations? Yea, do they not *cum ratione insanire*, even run mad with that, which they call their reason, though it be nothing better than a corrupt enmity against the honesty and simplicity of Christ? Give me leave to speak freely in this point; when the great mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, such are self-denial, reli-



ance upon the grace of God revealed by the Messiah, living by faith in another, and deriving strength from Christ through a promise; I say, when these things and the like are propounded to a natural understanding, and an unmortified heart, will it not say, that you do *lapides loqui*, speak stones unto it, and offer that which is too hard to be received?

Methinks, when I offer such spiritual truths to be judged at the tribunal of natural understanding, which I call argumentative knowledge, it is as when that which belongeth to one sense, is presented to an other, which cannot give a perfect judgement of it. He that would make me to understand what music is, and the excellency of it, must not bring me to one that can with eloquence relate a story thereof, and tell me in words, what ravishing harmony, and rare delights it doth entertain one withal, and then bid me imagine how every note exceeded the other; for this is not to touch upon the right string, but he must bring me to a concert, where mine ear may receive a true impression from such musical delights.

It is not enough to paint out the beauty of a rose in the most lively colours, and set it before mine eyes, but I must smell to the rose it self, and thereby come to know the sweetness of it. We may think to make our selves great doctors of the Law by a form of knowledge, but thereby we deceive our selves, attaining only to a poor and beggarly understanding of the truths therein contained; for the best way to know them, is to obey and practise them. He that hath his heart truly mortified to this world, and is crucified with Christ, being made alive again by that spirit of regeneration, he alone, doth attain to the most quick and lively apprehensions of those truths, that are revealed by Christ in his gospel.

Thirdly, if they alone do truly know the things of Christ, who have received his anointing, then certainly, wicked men are no competent judges of Christian doctrine. Whatsoever their parts are, or their acquired learning in arts and sciences, yet, as to heavenly things, they are very dark and ignorant. Perhaps, this inference, may provoke the great wits of the world, to say as those Pharisees did to Christ, are we blind also? But I am sure the Apostle tells us, He that hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of his, and he that is not one of Christ's flock, I do not know how he should understand Christ's voice. The profaning Jews had the *magnalia legis*, the great things of the law delivered to them, and they accounted them as a strange thing; for, as the Apostle speaks, Moses hath a veil lying upon his face, and when that people shall be converted unto the Lord, this veil shall be taken away. There is the flesh of Christ covering his spirit, there is the letter and shell of the word of Christ as it is printed in our Bibles, which doth, like a mask, cloud and hide the beautiful face of truth, so that a carnal heart cannot discern the beauty, or judge aright of the excellency thereof, so that the preaching of Christ crucified is an offence to the Jew, and to the Greeks foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, it is the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Great men are not always wise men, and the men of the world are not fit to advise withal in the things of God. Some there be whom God hath given up to a reprobate mind, to an injudicious mind, which hath no true judgement in heavenly things. Would any one make a mad man his counsellor? No, he would choose one that is *compos mentis*, one that is of a sober and discreet reason, and advise with him in a matter of difficulty. He that is of a ranting spirit, and given to the love of fleshly pleasures, may *verba conari*, may, like a parrot, speak words which he understands not, but he is crazed in his intellectuals, and knows not the way of the spirit in the soul. Let me hear one speak concerning the work of grace, the actings of faith, the drawings of the spirit; whose eyes have been opened, as Baalam said of himself, in another case, one who hath had an internal sense and feeling of these things within himself, for he is best able to unfold such hidden mysteries. But let us cease from man, for wherein is he to be accounted of? The day-dawning and the day-star arising in our hearts, will give us better light into that more sure word, of the prophets and apostles, than all the learned school-men, or voluminous commentators, who have not ploughed with God's heifer.

Fourthly, if knowledge of Christian doctrine must be received by spiritual anointing, then to be instructed in the letter of the Scriptures, is not enough to make a Christian. A man may by natural understanding, exercised upon the letter of the Bible, attain to very great orthodoxy in Articles of Faith, and several points of religion, for that which is true in divinity, is true also in reason; but notwithstanding all this literal knowledge, his soul may be like Pharaoh's lean kine, a starved and ill-favoured soul.

The generality of men in the world are exceedingly mistaken in this business; for they have thought it to be reformation enough, if they might but purge their Articles of Faith, and set forth in print that which might vindicate the truth of their opinions and ways from the prejudice that they lie under in the world, whereas in the midst of such reformation, men shall be as carnal and devilish as they were before. They shall inwardly be as full of pride, and covetousness, of envy and malice, of hatred and revenge as ever, and they shall have leave to study mischief, and conceive evil will against their neighbour, notwithstanding all the elaborate niceness of a reformed system.

Brethren, we must not only reform our books, though that be very good, but we must reform our hearts, and our lives; the power of this anointing must eat out the proud flesh of our distempered hearts, and quicken us also into a more pure and refined spirit. Professors do think they attain to a great measure of heavenly skill, if they are but so well read in the Bible, as to turn from one Scripture to another, and compare one place with another, whereby they may more strongly back that opinion which they would defend, whereas all this while, the Scripture is a thing without them, and the mind of God is in their Bibles, not in their hearts, but the true Christian hath the word of God tran-

scribed into himself, and can say in his measure, as Jesus Christ did, I delight to do thy will, O my God, Yea, thy law is within my heart.

Eunapius, in the Life of Porphyry, speaking of his Master Longinus saith, he was such an excellent scholar, that he was a living library, a walking study; all his books were so well digested, and their notions concocted in his mind, that he did (as it were) give life and motion to his books, in a requital for that learning which he had received from them.

He is a Christian to purpose, who hath the Bible transpired into his mind, who hath digested the sense of Scripture into practice and vital blood. He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh, but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, whose praise is not of men but of God.

Fifthly, doth the Apostle bring in this anointing of the spirit, as that which secures holy men from Antichristian impostures, then here may we see the ground of those great apostasies that are abroad. Do we at any time see some eminent professor come tumbling down like Lucifer from the height of his profession, and immersed himself in the dung of worldly wickedness? Let us know, the reason is, because he had no root in himself. They went out from us; saith our Apostle, for they were not of us, They were *leviter tincti, sed non penitus imbuti*, they have had perhaps some sudden and transient taste of sweetness in the ways of God, but never did feed upon them with savour, nor digest them. They went out from us, that it might be manifest that they were not all of us.

There be some men in the world, who have much of that which we call light in their understandings, but have no grace nor honesty in their hearts, and it is no wonder if they turn away from the truth in a time of temptation, and day of trial; it is the good ground that bringeth forth fruit, and it is the honest heart that stands in a tempest, being well bottomed and grounded upon a Rock. He that is hurried into any profession, by the impulse of his worldly affections, can not be settled and established in that profession, but must turn about when those affections give the word. He is like a ship whose sails are open to every gale of wind, but hath neither ballast nor rudder to keep it steady in its motion. Many people think themselves so good Protestants, that they should never turn Papists; who yet, I fear, would fall from their own steadfastness into the error of the wicked; and casting off the Protestant Articles, would easily entertain for faith the dogmata of Rome; the reason whereof is that their souls are not converted to that faith which they profess.

To an unregenerate man who gives up himself to licentiousness, all religion is alike, for religion doth oblige and command the soul into a diligent obedience to some rule, but such an unmortified heart cannot endure the beautiful bands of a religious law. But where the Gospel of Christ cometh, as it did to

the Thessalonians, not in word only, but in power and much full assurance, where the word of truth is made manifest in men's consciences, and becometh an engrafted word, there we may be persuaded with the Apostle, that he who hath begun a good work, will perfect it unto the coming of Christ.

This I must confess, that men by the improvement of their natural understandings, and by observing the dictates of natural conscience, may reform some external enormities and scandalous vices of their lives, and proceed further in profession upon account of some worldly considerations, but from all this reformation, though improved and carried on very high, they may again revolt, and apostatize, because the principles thereof were external and political, not internal and genuine: Such men as these are not like Timothy, whom Paul calleth his natural son in the faith, they are not natural, but artificial Christians. But he that is, not in appearance only, but in truth also, transformed into the image of Christ hath the seed of God remaining in him, and eternal life implanted, which shall never wither. He shall never drown himself in sensuality, or fall away from the holiness of a godly life, into the filth and baseness of a degenerate spirit.

The Apostle saith, *oportet esse haereses*, there must be heresies, that they which are approved may be made manifest. The understanding merchant knows which is the pearl of price, when one that is ignorant may be cheated with a counterfeit. This is the excellency and glory of a spirit taught of God, that when others fall away from the truth of doctrine and integrity of life, that will still adhere and cleave unto him; when the whole world shall lie in wickedness, that will preserve it self unspotted and blameless, unto the coming of Christ. Hence it was that the martyrs of old, though they could not dispute, yet they could die for Christ. He that is alive in God, shall not be religious only when he hath the times with him, for that is easy, the dead fish can swim down the stream; but when the wickedness of the times, and places where he lives draweth other men into a dissolute looseness, he shall stand like mount Zion, and never be removed.

Sixthly, if the spirit of Christ be such a teaching spirit, whereby we know him aright, then it concerns every regenerate soul to deal kindly with that spirit. Oh! be very tender of the good spirit of Jesus Christ. I mean not only that gentle spirit, which sometimes breathes upon the garden of our souls, and makes the spices thereof flow out and give their scent, but that spirit of Christ also which is united unto and implanted in our spirits, that new creature which is formed within us. Oh! take heed of grieving, tempting or quenching this spirit; *spiritus sanctus est res delicata*, the divine spirit is a very tender thing. Let none dare to cast water upon it, whereby to cool or damp it, but let it act according to its own natural tendency.

It was the great request of David's heart in Psalm 51:11, cast me not away from

thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. O Lord, whatsoever thou takest away, do not take this away: This spirit is that which puts me upon observance of thy will, and doth many times recover and bring me back again, when I have forgotten my self and thee. Christians! Would you know what you are most of all beholding to in the world? It is the good spirit and life of Jesus Christ. This is the life of your lives, and the soul of your souls; without this spirit you were but as other men, yea, you were unto God but as dead carcasses and stinking carrions.

Now if this spirit be our life, and if by this men live, Oh! then be kind and tender towards it; take heed least by any means you do offend it. Then doth a soul deal harshly and unkindly with this spirit, when it opposeth, resisteth and endeavoureth to stifle the motions of it, when the will of Christ in the soul is gainsaid. Take heed, Christians, that you be not so rude as to offer violence, and to force this holy spirit; when that moves you towards God, do not you turn away from God. What the Apostle begs for patience, I would beg for the spirit of Christ. Let the nature, spirit, and life of Christ have its perfect work in you, let it act according to its own freedom and latitude. The Holy Ghost that dwells in you, doth advise you not only to be Christians, *pro hic et nunc*, by fits and starts, so as may serve your own turns, but also to be enduring, and universal Christians. This divine spirit is not satisfied if you be only moved by it in your public assemblies, unless you be moved by it also in your closets, your shops, and in all your relations: for the sphere of the new creature, is, a sober, righteous, and godly life. Where this Holy Spirit dwells, it will prompt the soul to something which is transcendent, and above the strain of vulgar spirits.

Now suppose I should propound to this great Assembly the question that Christ propounded to his disciples in Matthew 5. What singular thing do you more than others? Yea, let me but propound it to those who are called the holy ones of the Most High, wherein do you excel the spirits of worldly men? What is there that may show you to be anointed with this divine spirit? Are you not as proud, as covetous, as vain in your conversations, as other men? Oh! then let me commend this unto you, as seasonable and wholesome counsel, take heed how you use the spirit of Christ which dwelleth in you, and suffer it to act like it self.

Seventhly, and lastly, if holy souls know heavenly things by virtue of the anointing from the holy one, which teacheth so sweetly and clearly, then from hence we may guess at the glory of heaven. We may stand upon this truth as Moses did upon the top of Pisgah, and from thence view the land of promise.

If the dignity of Christian in this world, be such as to have his mind enlightened with the pure spirit of Christ, whereby he knoweth the mind of God with infallible certainty, then what shall his glory be in the world to come? The Scriptures call that spirit which believers receive here the seal, the earnest and

first-fruits of that which they shall receive hereafter. And although this present knowledge which they have of heavenly truths, doth so far exceed and transcend all the literal knowledge of other men; yet the Apostle accounts it dark and enigmatical in comparison of that knowledge which he expects at the revelation of Jesus Christ; for in this mixture of flesh and spirit the soul doth use glasses and perspectives, but then it shall see, face to face, then shall it know even as it is known.

Oh! What infinite serenity and surpassing brightness shall then encompass holy souls, when they shall see all truth in him who is truth itself? Here we may often meet with vexations and disputes from contentious spirits, but in heaven there shall be *altum silentium*, a deep silence and everlasting rest, where our souls shall wade into a sea of light and enter into a vast eternity of truth. There shall be no spots, nor blemishes, no doubts nor scruples arising in our spirits, for it shall be all day, even a day without clouds. We shall never more be troubled with the importunity of busy arguments, there shall be no room for the disputer of this world, but the immaculate Lamb our Lord Jesus shall be the light of that new Jerusalem, and he shall enlighten our souls with his own light and glory for ever. Amen.

FINIS.

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