RARE BOOK COLLECTION

THE

DISTINGUISHING MARKS

OF A

WORK

OF THE

Spirit of GOD.

Extracted from Mr. EDWARDS.

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THE

Diſtinguiſhing Marks, &c.

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1 JOHN iv. 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.

1. THE apoſtolical Age was an Age of the greateſt out-pouring of the Spirit of GOD that ever was. And that both as to the extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit, 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 mimicking, both the ordinary and extraordinary Influences of the Spirit of GOD. This made it neceſſary that the Church of CHRIST ſhould be furniſhed with ſome certain Rules and diſtinguiſhing Marks, by which ſhe might proceed ſafely in judging of Spirits, and diſtinguiſh the true from the falſe. The giving ſuch Rules is the plain Deſign of this Chapter, where we have this Matter expreſly

treated of. 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 at this Time, when that which is ſo remarkable appears; ſuch an uncommon Operation on the Minds of People; and there is ſuch a Variety of Opinions concerning it, and ſo much Talk about the Work of the Spirit.

2. 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 keepeth his Commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him; and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.* Whence we may infer, That his Deſign in this Chapter is not only to give Marks whereby to diſtinguiſh the true Spirit from the falſe in his extraordinary Gifts of Prophecy and Miracles, but alſo in his ordinary Influences on the Minds of his People.

3. 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, 1. Here is the Duty of trying the Spirits urged, with a Caution annex'd, againſt over Credulouſneſs: *Beloved, believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits, whether they are of GOD.* 2. The Neceſſity of this Duty is ſhewn from this; That there were many Counterfeits, *becauſe many falſe Prophets were gone out into the World.* And theſe did not only pretend to have the Spirit of GOD in his extraordinary Gifts, but alſo to be eminently holy Perſons, to have much of his ordinary Influences on their Hearts. We are therefore to look upon theſe Words as a Direction to try their Pretences to the Spirit of GOD, in both theſe Reſpects.

After

4. After the Apoſtle had thus warn'd Chriſtians, 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 has the Pretext of being either the ordinary or extraordinary Work of the Spirit of GOD.

My Deſign therefore is to ſhew 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.

5. And here I would obſerve, that we are to take the Scriptures as our Guide in this and in all Caſes. This is the ſtanding Rule which GOD has given to his Church, to guide them in all Things relating to their Souls. And 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. And ſeeing he has done this, in the Chapter wherein is the Text; and done it more particularly and fully than any where elſe; in my preſent Diſcourſe I ſhall go no where elſe for 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.

6. Firſt, Nothing can certainly be concluded from this, *That the Work that appears is carried on in a Way very unuſual and extraordinary.* 'Tis 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 heretofore has not been wont 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 ſurprize 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, Things 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 can't 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 what has formerly been, yet if it 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 in its Favour.

7. Therefore 'tis 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. If they ſeem to have an extraordinary Conviction of the dreadful Nature of Sin, and a very uncommon Senſe of the Miſery of it, or extraordinary Views of the Certainty and Glory of divine Things; and 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 be very ſudden, and the Work carried on with very unuſual Swiftneſs, 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 Degree of Influence, if in its Nature it be agreeable to the Rules and Marks given in 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 is that Conformity.

8. There is a great Aptness in Persons to doubt of Things that are strange; especially it is difficult for elderly Persons to think that to be right which they have been never used to, and have not heard of in the Days of their Fathers. But if it be a good Argument that a Work is not from God, because it is very unusual, then it always was so, and was so in the Apostle's Days. For, 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, as neither the *Jews*, then living, nor their Fathers, had ever seen or heard. Yea such as never had been since the World stood: The Work was 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 we have Reason from Scripture Prophecy to suppose, that at the Commencement of the last and greatest Out-pouring of the Spirit of God, 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 *Isai.* lxvi. 8. *Who hath heard such a Thing? Who hath seen such Things? Shall the Earth be made to bring forth in one Day? Shall*

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.

9. Secondly, 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 no where gives us any ſuch Rule. We can't 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, have we any Reaſon to conclude, from any ſuch outward Appearances, that Perſons are not under the Influence of the Spirit of God, becauſe there is no Rule of Scripture given us to judge of Spirits by, that does either expreſly or indirectly exclude ſuch Effects on the Body; nor does Reaſon exclude them. 'Tis eaſily accounted for from the Nature of divine and eternal Things, and the Nature of Man, and the Laws of the Union between Soul and Body, how 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 ſuppoſe, that the Miſery of Hell is 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. We need not then wonder,

that

that when Perſons have a very great Senſe of that which is ſo amazingly dreadful, and alſo a great View of their own Wickedneſs and GOD's Anger, Things ſeem to them to forebode 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, 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, 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 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, whom 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.

10. So it may eaſily be accounted for, how a true Senſe of the glorious Excellency of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, and of his dying Love, ſhould be ſuch as to overcome the bodily Strength. We all own, that no Man can ſee GOD and live; and that 'tis but a very ſmall Part of that Apprehenſion of the Glory and Love of CHRIST, which the Saints in Heaven enjoy, that our preſent Frame can bear: Therefore 'tis not at all ſtrange that GOD ſhould ſometimes give his

Saints

Saints ſuch Foretaſtes of Heaven, as to diminiſh their bodily Strength.

11. But ſome object againſt ſuch extraordinary Appearances, that we have no Inſtances of them recorded in the New Teſtament. If this ſhould be allowed, I ſee no Force in the Objection, ſince neither Reaſon, nor any Rule of Scripture excludes ſuch Things. I don't know that we have any expreſs Mention in the New Teſtament of any Perſon's weeping, or groaning, or ſighing, thro' 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 don't argue thus, is, becauſe theſe are eaſily accounted for, from what we know of the Nature of Man, and from what the Scriptures 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. But tho' they are not particularly recorded, yet there is great Reaſon to think, from the general Accounts we have, that it could not be otherwiſe: And that that great Out-pouring of the Spirit which then was, was not wholly without thoſe extraordinary Effects on Perſons Bodies. The *Jaylor*, 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 appear a deſigned putting himſelf into a Poſture of Supplication; 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 xvi. 29, 30. The *Pſalmiſt* gives Account of himſelf crying out aloud, and a yet ſtronger, of a great weakening of his Body, under Convictions, and a Senſe of the Guilt of Sin, *Pſal.* xxxii. 3, 4. *When I kept Silence my Bones waxed old, through my roaring all the Day long; for Day and Night*

Night thy Hand was heavy upon me, my Moisture is turned into the Drought of Summer.

12. We read of the Disciples, *Matth.* xiv. 26. that when they saw CHRIST coming to them in the Storm, and took him for some terrible Enemy, *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 Danger of being swallowed up in the Bottomless Gulf of eternal Misery?

13. 'Tis a weak Objection, That the Impressions Enthusiasts are under, have been wont to have a *great Effect on their Bodies.* That the *Quakers* used to tremble, is no Argument that *Paul,* and the *Jaylor* 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 enquired into, and examined by the Rule of GOD's Word, and not the Motions of the Blood and animal Spirits.

14. Thirdly, 'Tis no Argument that an Operation 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 tho' true Religion does not delight in the Applause of Men, yet such is human Nature, that 'tis morally impossible there should be a great and general Concern, and Engagedness of Mind amongst a People, and yet but little said or done that should be publickly observable; or that it should not cause a visible and open Commotion and Alteration amongst that People.

Surely, 'tis no Argument that the Minds of Persons are not under the Influence of GOD's Spirit, that they are very much moved. For eternal Things are so great, and of such vast Concern, that there is a great Absurdity in Men's being but moderately

rately moved by them. 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.

15. Indeed CHRIST ſays, *Luke* xvii. 20. *The Kingdom of GOD cometh not with Obſervation:* That is, not with outward and viſible Pomp. And yet it ſhall not be ſet up in the World, on the Ruins of Satan's Kingdom, without a mighty Change in the State of Things; to the Obſervation and Aſtoniſhment of the whole World. This is declared in the Prophecies of Scripture, and by CHRIST himſelf, in this very Place, in his own Explanation of thoſe very Words, ver. 24. *For as the Lightning that lightneth out of one Part under Heaven, ſhineth 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 he tells us will be in a private Manner *in the Deſerts, and in the ſecret Chambers*, whereas this Event ſhould be open and publick, in the Sight of the whole World, like Lightning that cannot be hid, but glares in every ones Eyes, and ſhines from one Side of Heaven to the other.

Accordingly we find, that when CHRIST's Kingdom came, by that remarkable pouring out of the Spirit in the Apoſtle's Days, it occaſioned a great Stir and Ado every where. What a mighty Oppoſition was there in *Jeruſalem*, on occaſion of that great Effuſion of the Spirit there? And ſo what great Ado in *Samaria*, *Antioch*, *Epheſus*, *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 xvii. 6.

16. Fourthly, 'Tis no Argument that an Operation on the Minds of a People, is not the Work of the Spirit of GOD, *That many who are the Subjects of it, have great Impreſſions on their Imaginations.* That Perſons have many Impreſſions on their Imaginations, does not prove that they have nothing elſe. It is

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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. We can't think of Things inviſible, without a Degree of Imagination. I dare appeal to any Man, whether he is able to fix his Thoughts on CHRIST, or the Things of another World, without imaginary Ideas attending his Meditations? And the more engaged the Mind is, the more lively and ſtrong will the imaginary Idea ordinarily be; eſpecially when the Contemplation is attended with any Thing of Surprize. As when the View a Perſon has is new, and takes ſtrong Hold of the Paſſions, either Fear or Joy; and when the Change is ſudden, from a contrary Extreme, as from that which was extremely dreadful, to that which is extremely delightful. And it is no Wonder that many Perſons don't well 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.

17. 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 this is really helpful to the other Faculties of the Mind, when a proper Uſe is made of it; tho' often, when the Imagination is ſtrong, and the other Faculties weak, it overbears them. And it appears to me manifeſt in many Inſtances, that GOD has made Uſe of this Faculty to truly divine Purpoſes; eſpecially in ſome that are more ignorant: He 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

much Occaſion to deal with Souls in ſpiritual Concerns, judge whether Experience don't confirm it.

18. Fifthly, 'Tis no Sign that a Work 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.* 'Tis ſurely no Argument that an Effect is not from GOD, that Means are made Uſe of in producing it; and it is no more an Argument, that this Means is made Uſe of, than if it was any other Means. 'Tis 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, *Matth.* v. 16. 1 *Pet.* iii. 1. 1. *Tim.* iv. 12. *Tit.* ii. 7. and alſo directs us to be influenced by the good Examples that others ſet, and to follow them, 2 *Cor.* viii. 1—7. *Heb.* vi. 12. *Phil.* iii. 17. 1 *Cor.* iv. 16. and *Chap.* xi. 1. 2 *Theſſ.* iii. 9. 1 *Theſſ.* i. 7. By which it appears, that Example is one of GOD's Means; and certainly 'tis no Argument that a Work is not the Work of GOD, that GOD's own Means are made Uſe of to effect it.

19. And as this is a *ſcriptural* Way of carrying on GOD's Work, ſo 'tis a *reaſonable* Way. 'Tis 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 tend to enlighten their Minds. But the ſame Thing may be ſignified *by Actions*, and that more fully and effectually. Words are of no Uſe but as they convey our Ideas to others; and this, Actions, in ſome Caſes, may do more fully. There is a Language in Actions; and in ſome Caſes, much more clear and convincing than in Words.

'Tis 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, tho' the Impreſſion that is made upon them ſhould be only by ſeeing the Tokens of extraordinary Affection in others, without hearing them ſay one Word. There may be Language ſufficient in their Behaviour

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. If a Perſon ſhould ſee another under ſome extreme bodily Torment, he might receive much more convincing Evidence what he ſuffered, by his Actions in his Miſery, than he could do by the Words of a Relator. In like manner, he might receive a greater Idea of any Thing that is delightful, from the Behaviour of one that is in actual Enjoyment, than by the Narration of another. I deſire this Matter may be examined by the ſtricteſt Reaſon.

20. There never yet was a great Revival of Religion, but that Example had a main Hand in it. 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 Apoſtle's 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 *Theſſ.* i. 7, 8. *So that ye were Enſamples 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 God-ward is ſpread abroad.*

And 'tis 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, *Zech.* viii. 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.*

21. Sixthly, 'Tis 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.* 'Tis no Wonder at all, that in a mixt Multitude of all Sorts, wiſe and unwiſe, young and old, who 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; to do ſo requires a great deal of Diſcretion, and Strength and Steadineſs of Mind. A thouſand Imprudences won't 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.

We have a remarkable Inſtance in the New Teſtament, of a People that partook largely of that great Effuſion of the Spirit, among whom there nevertheleſs abounded Imprudences and great Irregularities; and that is the *Corinthians*. There is ſcarce any Church more celebrated in the New Teſtament for being bleſſed with large Meaſures of the Spirit of GOD; yet what manifold Imprudences, yea ſinful Irregularities, and ſtrange Confuſion did they run into, at the Lord's Supper, in other Parts of public Worſhip, in Contention about their Teachers, and even in the Exerciſe of their extraordinary Gifts, tho' they ſpake and acted by the immediate Inſpiration of the Spirit of GOD.

22. Nay, if we ſee great Imprudences, and even ſinful Irregularities in ſome that are employed as great Inſtruments to carry on the Work, it won't prove it not to be the Work of GOD. The Apoſtle *Peter* himſelf, one of the chief Inſtruments of ſetting up the Chriſtian Church in the World, when he was actually engaged in this Work, was guilty of a great and

and ſinful Error in his Conduct; of which the Apoſtle *Paul* ſpeaks, Gal. ii. 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.* Now if the great Pillar of the Chriſtian Church was guilty of ſuch an Irregularity, is it any Wonder if other leſſer Inſtruments ſhould be guilty of many Irregularities?

23. 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 Inſtruments to carry it on, are guilty of too great a Forwardneſs *to cenſure others as Unconverted*, 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 Infirmity and Corruption that may be left in the Hearts of true Believers.

'Tis obſervable that there never was a Time of great Reformation, a Spirit of *Zeal* in the Church of God, but that it has been attended with Irregularity, running out ſome Way or other into an undue *Severity*. Thus in the Apoſtle's Days, a great deal of Zeal was ſpent about unclean Meats, both Parties condemning one another, while St. *Paul* had Charity for both: *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 then carried on, was not the Work of God. After this, when Religion was ſtill flouriſhing in the World, and a Spirit of eminent Holineſs prevailed, the Zeal of Chriſtians run out into a very improper Severity, in the Exerciſe of Church Diſcipline towards Delinquents. And 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 were guilty of ſeverely cenſuring others that differed from them in Opinion.

24. Seventhly, 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. 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 is no more a Paradox than many other Things that are true of real Believers, in the preſent State, where Grace dwells with ſo much Corruption remaining for a while together in the ſame Heart. Many good Men have undoubtedly, in this and other Ages, expoſed themſelves to grievous 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.

25. Eighthly, if ſome *fall away into groſs Errors, or ſcandalous Practices*, 'tis 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 a 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

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fell away into groſs Hereſies, and alſo vile Practices. And they were not only private Chriſtians, but Teachers and Officers, and eminent Perſons in the Chriſtian Church; and ſome whom GOD had endowed with miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt.

An Inſtance of this Nature was *Nicolas*, one of the ſeven Deacons, who was looked upon by the Chriſtians in *Jeruſalem*, 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* vi. 3, 5. yet he afterwards fell away, and became the Head of a Sett of vile Heretics, of groſs Practices, called from his Name the Sect of the *Nicolaitans*, Rev. ii. 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 'tis 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, boaſting of high Degrees of Spirituality, 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. And ſome of the Leaders of thoſe wild Enthuſiaſts, had been for a while highly eſteemed by the firſt Reformers.

And ſo in the Beginning of *New England*, when vital Piety flouriſhed, ſuch 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 carried on.

26. Ninthly, 'tis no Argument that a Work is not from the Spirit of GOD, *That it is 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 dreadful and never-ending Torments, which Multitudes are in great Danger of,

and which the bigger 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, 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 here, whether this is not the very Courſe they would take in caſe of 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, that ſeemed inſenſible of its Danger, and neglected to eſcape, after you had often called to it, would you go on to ſpeak in a cold and indifferent Manner? Would not you cry aloud, and repreſent the Danger it was in, and the Folly in delaying, in the moſt lively Manner you was capable of? 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? It is not the Way of Mankind, in temporal Affairs of great Moment, that require earneſt Heed and great Haſte, to ſpeak to others of their Danger, and warn them but a little; and when they do it at all, in a cold indifferent Manner: Nature teaches Men otherwiſe. If then we that have the Care of Souls, knew what Hell was, had ſeen the State of the Damned, or by any other Means, became ſenſible how dreadful their Caſe was; and at the ſame Time knew that the bigger Part of Men went thither, and ſaw our Hearers in imminent Danger, and yet inſenſible of their Danger, it would be morally impoſſible for us to avoid moſt earneſtly ſetting before them the Dreadfulneſs

falnefs of that Misery they were in Danger of, and warning them to fly from it.

27. When Ministers preach of Hell, and warn Sinners to avoid it, in a cold Manner, tho' 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 as well as Words. And at the same Time that such a Preacher's Words represent the Sinner's State as infinitely dreadful, if his Behaviour and Manner of speaking contradict it, he defeats his own Purpose; for the Language of his Actions, is much more effectual than the bare Signification of his Words.

Not that I think 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. So that a Minister ought not to 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.

Indeed some talk of it as an unreasonable Thing to think to fright Persons to Heaven. But I think it is a reasonable Thing to endeavour to fright 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. 'Tis a reasonable Thing to fright a Person out of an House on Fire. The Word *Fright* is commonly used for sudden, causeless Fear, or groundless Surprize; but surely a just Fear, that there is good Reason for, tho' it be very great, is not to be spoken against under any such Name.

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

I proceed in the *Second Place*, to shew 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

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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 by the Apoſtle in this Chapter, where this Matter is particularly handled, and more plainly and fully than any where 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.

Firſt, when that Spirit that is at Work amongſt a People is obſerved to raiſe their Eſteem of that *Jeſus* that was born of *the Virgin*, and was crucified without the Gates of *Jeruſalem*; and to confirm their Minds in the Truth of what the Goſpel declares, of his being the Son of God, and the Saviour of Men; 'tis a ſure Sign that that Spirit is of God. This Sign the Apoſtle gives us in the 2d and 3d Verſes. *Hereby 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 who did and ſuffered thoſe Things that are recorded of him, but that that Perſon was CHRIST, *i. e.* the Son of God, the anointed of God to be Lord and Saviour. That thus much is implied, 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 'tis 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 a Thing by Teſtimony, and declaring it with Eſteem and Affection; ſo Matth. x. 32. *Whoſoever ſhall confeſs me before Men, him will I confeſs before my Father which is in Heaven.* Rom. xvi. 9. *I will confeſs to thee among the Gentiles, and ſing unto thy Name.* And, Phil. ii. 11. *That every Tongue may confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father.* And that this is the Force of the Expreſſion here, is confirmed by that other Place in the ſame Epiſtle, in the

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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 Cor. xii. 3. *Wherefore I give you to understand, that no Man speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed,* (or will shew 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 which 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; to confirm their Minds in the Belief 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 to beget in them higher 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.

29 But the Words of the Apostle are remarkable; the Person the Spirit gives Testimony to, and to whom he raises their Esteem, must be that *JESUS that appeared in the Flesh,* and not another CHRIST in his Stead; nor any mystical, fantastical CHRIST *within,* which diminishes their Esteem of, and Dependance 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 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. He that heightens Mens Esteem of the glorious *Michael,* that Prince

Prince of the Angels, is not the Spirit of the *Dragon* that is at War with him.

30. Secondly, When the Spirit that is at Work *operates againſt the Intereſt of Satan's Kingdom, which lies in eſtabliſhing Sin, and cheriſhing Mens worldly Luſts*; this is a ſure Sign that 'tis a true, and not a falſe Spirit. This Sign is given in the 4th and 5th 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 'tis evident the Apoſtle is ſtill comparing thoſe that are influenced by the two oppoſite Kinds of Spirits, the true and the falſe, and ſhewing the Difference; the one are of GOD, and overcome the Spirit of the World; the other are of the World, and ſpeak and favour 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 'tis otherwiſe with Satan's Kingdom; he is *the God of this World.*

What the Apoſtle means by *the World*, or *the Things of the World*, we learn by his own Words, in the 2d Chapter. *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 Sin, 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.*

So that we may ſafely determine, the Spirit which works after ſuch a Manner, as to leſſen Mens Eſteem of the Pleaſures, Profits and Honours of the World, to take off their Hearts from theſe Things; and to engage them in a deep Concern about eternal Happineſs; which puts them upon earneſt ſeeking the Kingdom of GOD and his Righteouſneſs, and convinces them of the Dreadfulneſs of Sin; I ſay, the Spirit that ope-

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 the Candle of the LORD shine the brighter, and to open the Mouth of that Vicegerent of GOD in the Soul. Would the Devil, when he is about to establish Men in Sin, waken the Conscience to see the Dreadfulness of it, make them exceedingly 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, who suppose that the Spirit that operates thus, is the Spirit of the Devil?

31. Possibly some may say, that the Devil may awaken Mens Consciences to deceive them, and make them think they are of GOD, while they are indeed 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: 'Tis the drowsy, insensible, 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, the less likely is he to rest in his own Righteousness, or to be pacified with 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 good Grounds.

To awaken Conscience, and convince of the Evil of Sin, cannot then 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, can't be the Spirit of the Devil; if CHRIST knew how to argue, who told the *Pharisees*, that supposed the Spirit he wrought by, was the

Spirit of the Devil, *that Satan would not caſt out Satan*, Matth. xii. 25, 26.

And therefore, if we ſee Perſons made ſenſible of the dreadful Nature of Sin, and of the Diſpleaſure of GOD againſt it, earneſtly concerned for their eternal Salvation, ſenſible of their Need of GOD's Help, and engaged to ſeek it in the Uſe of the Means that GOD has appointed, we may certainly conclude this is from the Spirit of GOD; whatever Effects this Concern has on their Bodies; tho' it cauſes them to cry out aloud, or to ſhriek, or to faint, or tho' 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 *wean'd* 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.

32. Thirdly, That Spirit which 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 6th Verſe: *We are of GOD; he that knoweth GOD heareth us: He that is not of GOD, heareth not us: Hereby know we 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 In"ſtructions that are to be their Rule; therefore *he* "*that knoweth GOD, heareth us*, &c."——The Apoſtle's Argument in the Verſe equally reaches all that in the ſame Senſe *are of GOD*, that is, all thoſe whom GOD appointed 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. The Devil never would go about to beget in Perſons a Regard to that divine Word, which GOD hath given to be the

the great and ſtanding Rule for the Direction of his Church in all Ages. A Spirit of Deluſion won't incline Perſons 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*. 'Tis GOD's own Direction to diſcover their Deluſions, *Iſai.* viii. 19, 20. *And when they ſhall ſay unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar Spirits: — 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 don't 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 an 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 ſhewn a mortal 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 'tis 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: 'Tis the main Weapon which *Michael* uſes in his War with him: 'Tis the Sword of the Spirit that pierces him, and conquers him: 'Tis that *great, and ſore and ſtrong Sword*, with which GOD *puniſhes Leviathan, that crooked Serpent.* 'Tis that ſharp Sword that we read of, *Rev.* xix. 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, to depreciate this written Rule, and ſet up ſome other Rule above it.

33. Fourthly, 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 6th Verſe, *The SPIRIT OF TRUTH, and the SPIRIT OF ERROR.* Theſe Words exhibit the two oppoſite Characters of the Spirit of GOD, and other Spirits. And therefore, if we ſee that a Spirit operates as a *Spirit of Truth*, leading Perſons to *Truth*, convincing them of thoſe Things that are true, we may ſafely determine 'tis a right and true Spirit. As for Inſtance, if we obſerve that the Spirit which 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 juſt GOD; and makes them more to realize it, that they muſt die, that Life is ſhort, and very uncertain; that there is another World; that they have immortal Souls, and that they muſt give Account of themſelves to GOD; if it convinces them that they are exceeding 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; and we may conclude, that 'tis not the Spirit of Darkneſs that doth thus *diſcover* and *make manifeſt* the Truth.

34. Fifthly, If the Spirit that is at work among a People *operates as a Spirit of Love to GOD and Man*, 'tis a ſure Sign that 'tis the Spirit of GOD. This Sign the Apoſtle inſiſts upon from the 6th Verſe to the End of the Chapter: *Beloved, let us love one another; for Love is of GOD, and every one that loveth is born of GOD, and knoweth GOD: He that loveth not, knoweth not GOD, for GOD is Love*, &c. Here 'tis 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 12th and 13th Verſes, *If we love one another, GOD dwelleth in us, and his Love is perfected in us: Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, becauſe he hath given us of his*

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, and in the 16th Verse of this. Therefore this last Mark 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 7th, 11th, and 12th Verses; and of *Love to GOD*, in the 17th, 18th and 19th 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, works in them a delightful Sense of the Excellency of JESUS CHRIST; representing him as the Chief among ten Thousand, altogether lovely, and makes him precious to the Soul; winning and drawing the Heart with 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 ver. 9, 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 ver. 16. *And we have known, and believed the Love that GOD hath to us.* And ver. 19. *We love him, because he first loved us:* When the Spirit excites to Love on these Motives, and makes the Soul to long after GOD and CHRIST, and to live so as to please and honour 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, there is the highest Evidence of a true and divine Spirit.

35. Indeed there is a Counterfeit of Love, that often appears amongſt thoſe that are led by a Spirit of Deluſion. But there is ſufficient ſaid in this Paſſage of truly Chriſtian Love, to diſtinguiſh it from all ſuch Counterfeits. It is Love that ariſes from an Apprehenſion of the wonderful Riches of GOD's Love to us, in CHRIST JESUS; attended with a Senſe of our own Unworthineſs, and a Renunciation of all our own Excellency and Righteouſneſs. See ver. 9, 10, 11, and 19. The ſureſt Character of true divine Love, is, that it is an humble Love, 1 Cor. xiii. 4. *Charity vaunteth not itſelf; is not puffed up.* When therefore we ſee Love in Perſons attended with a Senſe of their own Littleneſs, Vileneſs, Weakneſs, and utter Inſufficiency; and ſo with 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.

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.

36. Thus I have ſpoken particularly to the ſeveral Marks the Apoſtle gives 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 of their great Need of a Saviour. And he would not confirm Men in a Belief that JESUS is the Son of GOD, and the Saviour of Sinners, or raiſe their Value and Eſteem of Him: He would not beget in Mens 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 ſhew Men the Truth, in Things that concern their Souls; 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; nor could he if he would: Theſe Things are as contrary

trary as possible to his Nature. And therefore, when there is an extraordinary Influence on the Minds of a People, if these Things are found in it, we are safe in determining that 'tis the Work of GOD, whatever other Circumstances it may be attended with, whatever Instruments are employed, 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 Mens Bodies. These Marks, that the Apostle has given, are sufficient to stand alone, and support themselves; and where-ever they are, they plainly shew the Finger of GOD, and are sufficient to outweigh a thousand such Objections, as many make from Oddities, Irregularities, and Errors in Conduct, and the Delusions and Scandals of some seeming Believers.

37. But here some may object what the Apostle *Paul* says, in the 2 *Cor.* xi. 13, 14. *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* 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 in-* "*to 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

ſame ſort of Men with thoſe *falſe Apoſtles*, and *deceitful Workers*, that the Apoſtle *Paul* ſpeaks of, 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 for that End. That is the Apoſtle's declared Purpoſe, 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 Shew, and great Boaſts of extraordinary Knowledge in divine Things; *Col.* ii. 8. 1 *Tim.* i. 6, 7. and *Chap.* vi. 3, 4, 5. 2. *Tim.* ii. 14, 16, 17, 18. *Tit.* i. 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 *Matt.* xxiv. 24. Again, there was a falſe Shew of, and lying Pretences to great Holineſs and Devotion in Words: *Rom.* xvi. 17, 18. *Eph.* iv. 14. Hence they are called *deceitful Workers*, and *Wells*, and *Clouds without Water.* 2 *Cor.* xi. 13. 2 *Pet.* ii. 17. *Jude* 12. There was alſo in them a Shew of extraordinary Piety and Righteouſneſs in their ſuperſtitious Worſhip: *Col.* ii. 16, 17, 18. 21, 22, 23. So they had a falſe, proud and bitter Zeal; *Gal.* iv. 17, 18. 1 *Tim.* i. 6. and *Chap.* vi. 4, 5. And likewiſe a falſe *Shew 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

exceedingly lifted up with their eminent Piety: *Col.* ii. 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?

38. Having thus done 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 no, I now proceed to the Application.

I. From what has been said, I will venture to draw this *Inference*, viz. *That that extraordinary Influence that has lately appeared on the Minds of the People abroad in this Land, causing in them an uncommon Concern 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, viz. *Facts* and *Rules*. The *Rules* of the Word of GOD we have 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 so many Things concerning it that are notorious, as, unless the Apostle *John* was out in his Rules, are sufficient to determine it to be in general the Work of GOD. 'Tis notorious that the Spirit that is at work, takes off Persons Minds from the Vanities of the World, engages them in a deep Concern about eternal Happiness, puts them upon earnestly seeking their Salvation, and convinces them of the Dreadfulness of Sin, and of their own guilty and miserable State by Nature. It is notorious that it awakens Mens Consciences, and make them sensible of the Dreadfulness of GOD's Anger, and causes in them a great Desire and earnest Care and Endeavour to obtain his Favour. It is notorious that it puts them upon a more diligent Improvement of the Means of Grace which GOD has appointed. It is also notorious,

rious, that, in general, it works in Perſons a greater Regard to the Word of God, and Deſire of hearing and reading of it. And it is notoriouſly manifeſt that the Spirit 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 and juſt God, whom they are accountable to, and that they ſtand in great Need of a Saviour. It is furthermore notorious, that this Spirit 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 can't 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, and in the principal and moſt populous, and public Places in it. And it 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.

39. And here I would obſerve, that the Nature and Tendency of a Spirit that is at Work, may be determined with much greater Certainty, when it is obſerved in a great Multitude of People of all Sorts, and in various 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. 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, for many Months together, by thoſe that are moſt intimate with them in theſe Affairs, and have long been acquainted with them, ſtill it can't be determined what Kind of Influence the Operation

ration they are under, has upon People's Minds; whether it tends to awaken their Consciences, or to stupify them; to incline them more to seek their Salvation, or neglect it; whether it confirms them in a Belief of the Scriptures, or leads them to Deism; 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 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;" if those he made such a Profession to would not believe him, tho' they had long been conversant with him, and tho' 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 by great Numbers of People, to suppose that they all agree in professing what indeed they do not feel in their Souls.

40. Those in whom have been the uncommon Appearances, whence have arisen the main Objections to this Work, 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 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, there have been very few; but by all that could be observed, their Distress has arisen from real proper Conviction. And tho' I don't 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 impossible to avoid them. Generally those that have been in these Agonies have appeared

peared 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 remember, 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 mixt; and when it is so, the Difference is very apparent; their Distresses are of another Kind, and operate quite after another Manner. 'Tis not Truth only that distresses them, but many vain Shadows and Notions. Some in their great Distress have not been able to give an Account of themselves, or to explain the Manner and Cause of their Trouble to others. But this won't be at all wonder'd 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 know not how to accommodate Language to, or to find Words to express. And some who at first say they know not what was the Matter with them, on being particularly examined, have been able to represent their Case, tho' of themselves they could not find Expressions so to do.

41. Some say the Terrors they think 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 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 a general

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, 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 the Wrath of GOD appears amazingly terrible to them: GOD appearing to them so much provoked, they are apprehensive he will not bear with them any longer; but will now forthwith send them down to the dreadful Pit they have in View. 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 feared every Moment it would be executed upon them, they have been greatly convinced it would be altogether just that it should. And very often some Texts of Scripture, to that Effect, has been set Home upon their Minds, whereby their Minds have been calm'd, 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 GOD; but their bodily Strength much spent; and sometimes their Lives, to Appearance, almost gone. 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 Redeemer, and Longings to lie in the Dust before him; and Longings that others might behold and embrace him; and Longings to live to his Glory; but appearing vile in their own Eyes, and having

much 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 it uſed to act in thoſe that were converted formerly; except that in many Light and Comfort have been in a higher Degree. Many very young Children have been thus wrought upon. There have been ſome Inſtances very much like thoſe Demoniacks, *Mark* i. 26. and Chap. ix. 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.

42. Some object againſt it, as great Confuſion, when there is a Number together, in ſuch Circumſtances; and ſay, GOD can't 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 duly directed to their End, ſo that the Order and the due Connection of Means being broken, they fail of their End; but Conviction and Converſion of Sinners is the End of religious Means. Not but I think Perſons ſhould endeavour to refrain from ſuch outward Manifeſtations, in the Time of the ſolemn Worſhip. But if God is pleaſed to convince the Conſciences of Perſons, ſo that they can't avoid great outward Manifeſtations, even to the interrupting, and breaking off thoſe public Means they were attending, I don't 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 publick 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

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 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 many have been even overcome with Pity to the Souls of others, and longing for their Salvation.

43. As to the Imprudences and Irregularities 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 be attended with such Things. 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 mix'd with true, for a while; which hardened the unbelieving *Egyptians*, and made them to doubt of the Divinity of the whole Work. When Day-light first appears after a Night of Darkness, we must expect to have Darkness mixt with Light, for a while, and not have perfect Day, and the Sun risen at once. The Fruits of the Earth are green before they are ripe, and come to their Perfection gradually; and so Christ tells us, *is the Kingdom of God.* Mark iv. 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 knoweth not how: For the Earth bringeth 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 wonder'd at, if it be considered, that it is chiefly young Persons that have been the Subjects of it. And doubtless it has been one Occasion of much of the Misconduct there has been, that in many Places, People who 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, dare 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 favour the Work, and rejoice in it, yet 'tis 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.

44. II. Let us all be hence warned, *by no Means to oppoſe, or do any Thing, in the leaſt to hinder that Work that has lately been carried on in the Land.*

The Example of the *Jews* in Chriſt's and the Apoſtles Times, is enough to beget in thoſe that don't acknowledge this Work, a great Jealouſy of themſelves, and to make them exceeding cautious of what they ſay or do. Chriſt then *was in the World, and the World knew him not: He came to his own*, by Profeſſion, *and his own received him not.* That coming of Chriſt had been much ſpoken of in Scripture, and had been long expected; and yet becauſe Chriſt came in a Manner that they did not expect, they would not own him, but oppoſed 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; 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,

ledge, agreeable to Isai. xxix. 14. *Therefore behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous Work amongst this People, even a marvellous 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 Honour, and to reproach their Formality and Lukewarmness. Yea, some maliciously and openly opposed and reproached the Work of the Spirit of GOD, and called it the Work of the Devil.

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, that has been long expected by the Church of GOD; and we have Reason to think 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. 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.

45. Those that can't 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 ſhalt 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 Men 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 in the Land. 'Tis 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 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 'tis with the Word of GOD; they are full of thoſe Things that ſeem ſtrange and inconſiſtent and difficult to the 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 Lilly, and caſt forth his Roots as Lebanon*, concludes all thus, *Who is wiſe? and he ſhall underſtand 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.*

'Tis 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

mong Profeſſors. And if one Kind of Stumbling-Blocks are removed, 'tis to be expected that others will come. 'Tis with CHRIST's Works, as it was with his Parables; Things that are difficult to Mens dark Minds, are ordered of Purpoſe, for the Trial of Perſons Diſpoſitions and ſpiritual Senſe. 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 hardned in their Unbelief.

46. It is to be wondered at, that thoſe who have doubted of the Work that has been attended with ſuch uncommon external 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 enquiring into them; not contenting themſelves only with obſerving two or three Inſtances, nor reſting till they were fully informed by their own Obſervation. I don't doubt, but that if this Courſe had been taken, it would have convinced all whoſe Minds are not ſhut up againſt Conviction. How greatly have they erred, who only from the uncertain Reports of others, have ventured to ſpeak ſlightingly of theſe Things? That Caution of an unbelieving *Jew* might teach them more Prudence, *Acts* v. 38, 39. *Refrain from theſe Men, and let them alone; for if this Counſel, or this Work be of Men, it will come to nought; but if it be of GOD, ye cannot overthrow it: leſt haply ye be found to fight againſt GOD.*

I come now in the

47. III. and laſt Place, to apply myſelf to thoſe that are the Friends of this Work, who have been Partakers of it, or 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 deſired 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 who was of the contrary Part might be aſhamed, having no evil Thing to ſay of them*, Tit. ii. 7, 8. We had need to be *wiſe as Serpents, and harmleſs as Doves.* 'Tis of no ſmall Conſequence that we ſhould behave ourſelves innocently and prudently. We muſt expect that the great Enemy of this Work will 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 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, Self-Diffidence, and an entire Dependance on our LORD, will be our beſt Defence. Let us therefore maintain the ſtricteſt Watch againſt ſpiritual Pride, or a being lifted up with extraordinary Experiences and Comforts. 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 high Thoughts of ourſelves, as being now peculiar Favourites 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, tho' his Face ſhone ſo as to dazzle the Eyes of *Aaron* and the People, yet he did not ſhine in his own Eyes; *he wiſt not that his Face ſhone.* Let none think themſelves out of Danger of this ſpiritual Pride. GOD ſaw that the Apoſtle *Paul* himſelf was not out of Danger of it, no not when he had juſt been converſing with GOD in the third Heaven: See 2 *Cor.* xii. 7. Pride 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 Way of working, of any Luſt whatſoever.

ſoever. It is ready to mix with every Thing; and nothing is ſo hateful to GOD, and contrary to the Spirit of the Goſpel; and there is no one Sin that does ſo much let in the Devil into the Hearts of Men, and expoſe them to his Deluſions. I have ſeen it in many Inſtances. The Devil has come in at this Door, preſently after ſome extraordinary Communion with GOD, and has wofully deluded and led them aſtray, till GOD has mercifully opened their Eyes: And they themſelves have afterwards been ſenſible, that it was Pride that betrayed them.

48. Some of the true Friends of the Work of GOD's Spirit have err'd in giving too much heed to Impulſes and ſtrong Impreſſions of their Minds. 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 Heart. They are of the Nature of the *extraordinary Gifts* of the Spirit, which the Apoſtle diſtinguiſhes from the Grace of the Spirit, in the 13th Chapter of the 1 *Cor.*

But his ordinary gracious Influences are by far the moſt excellent and glorious, as the Apoſtle largely ſhews in the firſt of *Corinthians*, beginning with the 31ſt Verſe of the 12th Chapter, where ſpeaking of the extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit, he ſays, *But covet earneſtly the beſt Gifts; and yet I ſhew you a more excellent Way*, i. e. a more excellent Way of the Influence of the Spirit: And then he goes on in the next Chapter, to ſhew what that more excellent Way is, even that which is in the Grace of the Spirit, which ſummarily conſiſts in *Charity*, or divine *Love*. 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 don't 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 dear Children: He has ſometimes thrown out the other to Dogs and Swine, as he did to *Balaam*, *Saul* and *Judas*. Many wicked Men at the Day of Judgment will plead, *Have we not prophefied in thy Name, and in thy Name caſt out Devils, and in thy Name done*

many

many wonderful Works. The greateſt Privilege of the Prophets and Apoſtles, was not their working Miracles, but their eminent Holineſs. The Grace that was in their Hearts, was a thouſand Times more their Dignity and Honour, than their miraculous Gifts. To have Grace in the Heart is an higher Privilege than the bleſſed Virgin herſelf 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* xi. 27, 28. *And it came to paſs as he ſpake theſe Things, a certain Woman of the Company lift up her Voice, and ſaid unto him; Bleſſed is the Womb that bare 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.*

49. The ordinary ſanctifying Influences of the Spirit of GOD are the End of all extraordinary Gifts, as the Apoſtle ſhews, *Eph.* iv. 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; 'tis 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, *viz. Charity*, or Divine *Love*, which never faileth. Therefore the Glory of the approaching happy State of the Church don't 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 perhaps 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

given to the Church only to support it in its Minority, till the Church should have a compleat 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 intirely vanish, when the Church should come to the State of Manhood; 1 *Cor.* xiii. 11. *When I was a Child, I spake as a Child, I understood as a Child, I thought as a Child: But when I became a Man, I put away childish Things.*

For my Part, I had rather enjoy the sweet Influences of the Spirit, shewing CHRIST's infinite Grace, and dying Love, drawing forth the holy Exercises of Faith, and humble Joy in GOD, one Quarter of an Hour, than to have prophetical Visions and Revelations for a whole Year. It appears to me much more probable that GOD should give such 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, 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 intreat 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 presently after, yea in the midst of sweet Communion with GOD, and attended with Texts of Scripture strongly impress'd 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.

50. Neither let us despise human Learning. They that say human Learning is of little or no Use in the Work of the Ministry, don't consider what they say; if they did, they would not say it. By human Learning I mean, and suppose others mean, the Improvement of the 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 any 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. 'Tis 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

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, *viz.* Study; and that this is of great Uſe in order to a Preparation for a publick inſtructing others. And tho' 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 needleſly 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, tho' it be not ſo quick. And I would pray that *Method*, which tends greatly to help both the Underſtanding and Memory, may not be wholly neglected.

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.

51. One other Thing that I would intreat the Friends of this 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 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 touch'd. 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 *Tim.* xxiv. 25, 26. *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.*

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