

SERMON XXX

THE REVEALING EVIDENCE OF THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST

Tobias Crisp

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD hath laid {or, made to meet,} on him the iniquity of us all." {Is.53:6}

The last point was this, that it is the iniquity of every one of us that the Lord hath laid upon Christ; us, that "like sheep have gone astray, and turned everyone to his own way."

But, because there ariseth such a great scruple out of these general expressions, namely, how I and you shall know in particular to ourselves, that we are included in this; therefore we come to consider, whether a person, or rather how a person, may know certainly his, or her iniquities, are in particular laid upon Christ. The reason of this great query was, that though the Holy Ghost speaks of such as go astray, and turn to their own ways, that their iniquities are laid upon Christ; yet say some, and that truly, it is not everyone that goeth astray, and turneth to his own way, it is but some of these that have their iniquities laid upon Christ; and, saith the poor fainting spirit, I may be one of those that go astray, and turn to their own ways, that are set aside, and not one of those that shall share in this mercy. And therefore I would know, whether I am one of those that shall partake of this grace, and not one of those that are rejected. I know this is a great scruple among tender consciences, thirsting after nothing more than to be satisfied, and have the case cleared, that there be no place for any more objections, that they, in particular, have a portion in this grace.

For resolution of this, I told you some evidences there are to resolve this case, yet a great mistake there is in some, for the clearing of it. This, I then said, and say again, that signs, and marks, drawn from the fruits of sanctification, are at best very litigious and doubtful evidences to resolve a spirit; and let the most sanctified person, but consider the manifold frailties and wanderings, in the best work that ever he did, and he shall have occasion to suspect that very work, as not able to speak peace unto him.

Universal obedience, sincerity of heart, and love to the brethren, are three special marks I took in task, and showed how far a soul will be to seek of certain resolutions from these, when they are thoroughly examined. I shall not repeat particulars again; I will add a word in general, and so close this matter.

Beloved, whoever you are that will examine yourselves by the fruits of sanctification, that are properly the righteousness of man after or according to the law; I dare be bold to say, there is no one fruit of it, let it be sincerity, hatred of sin, love to the brethren, or what it will, if it speaks as the Lord hath given it to speak, that can speak peace to a soul. My ground is that which is delivered by the apostle, Gal.3:10, "the law, {saith he} is not of faith;" but its voice is, "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them, &c." Now, I beseech you, come home a little; this being the voice of the law, and consequently of everything that is done, or rather not done, according to it, how can anything we do, except it be done according to this rule exactly, speak peace? Take it in what sign or mark you will; let it be in what kind of obedience you can imagine, I ask, and I pray you ask yourselves this question, whether have you continued in all things written in the law to do them, in that particular? I say, have you performed everything in that particular you examine yourselves by? No, you will say, there have been failings in some things; now, I ask, what this can say to you that shall be the rule of your trial, as it stands full of failings and imperfections, can this speak peace? Then it speaks directly otherwise than the Lord hath given it to speak; that whatever a person doth, if there be not a continuance in all things written in the law to do them, the voice is cursing, "Cursed is every one, &c."

How then can it secure a man, and resolve him that he hath interest in Christ, is a child of God, that saith, cursed art thou till thou continue in all things requisite to such particulars that are the rule of thy examination? Now the law can deliver no other voice but this; until it meet with continuance in all things. Hence it is that, in Gal.4:23,24, the apostle distinguishes between the spiritual and natural seed of Abraham; the latter sort he compares to Agar, which is mount Sinai in Arabia, and this, saith he, "gendereth unto bondage;" the former are the children of Abraham according to the promise; as much as to say, persons born to the law, that have no other rule to walk by, and to try their estates by, are thereby brought into bondage.

The apostle, Heb.2:15, tells us that Christ came to "deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." His meaning is, that the Jews, by the discipline they were under, had for the usual evidence of their peace, a conformity to the law, or a righteousness according to that; this was their ordinary way; and so, till Christ came to reveal himself in the grace of the gospel, they had nothing to resolve their spirits, for satisfaction concerning their condition, but the law, and so were still subject to bondage through fear of death; as much as to say, he that hath nothing else to speak peace to him, but his own righteousness, that is so far from delivering him from this fear of death, that it keeps him in bondage all his life long under it, whilst he walks by such a rule for his peace; I say not, while he walks by such a rule for his conversation; mistake me not, but while he walks by such a rule for his peace; and the reason is, because the best sanctification, in regard of the imperfections of it, is not able to speak peace to the soul, because it pronounces directly a curse. And therefore, beloved, though I will not say but that there may be comfort in some sort, even from the fruits of the spirit in men; yet that which must resolve the case, the great case, and satisfy the spirit of a person, that he hath interest in Christ, and his privileges, must be something else besides his own righteousness.

It is true, there are some kinds of comfort will flow even from the fruits of the spirit in men's conversation; namely, as he seeth how God is glorified by it in the world; it must needs administer a great deal of joy to the people of God, that he will use them as instruments, to set forth the praise of the glory of his grace; as for example, thou art a minister, and in thy ministry the Lord is pleased to show himself, in some great measure to clear up the consciences of his people, and cheer their hearts; and thou art an instrument of his glory, in that his free grace in the gospel, and the truth and simplicity of it is published; now thou rejoicest that the Lord is glorified. But if we shall proceed so far as to gather our peace from the exercise of this ministry, thereby to be resolved of our interest in Christ from our diligence and sincerity therein; then we must know, that except there be perfection in it, this very ministry itself speaks a curse.

But, beloved, to come to the great question yet remaining; are there not any evidences by which persons may know comfortably their interest in the privileges of Christ?

I answer, yes; there are evidences to resolve men, if the Lord do but give them unto them, and power to receive them; men may thereby sit down satisfied concerning their own interest in the privileges of Christ. Which are they, will you say? They are two. The one is a revealing evidence, and the other is a receiving evidence. The revealing evidence is the voice of the Spirit of God to a man's own spirit; this is the great evidence, indeed, and which at last determines the question, and puts an end to all objections; even the voice of the Spirit of the Lord speaking particularly in the heart of a person, "son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." When he saith this to the soul, there shall be never an objection, while this voice is received, worth a rush, to disquiet and disturb it; and till the Spirit of the Lord come immediately himself, and speak this to a soul, all the world shall never be able to satisfy it. In brief, therefore, beloved, you shall know your sins are laid upon Christ by the Spirit of the Lord speaking this to you; and, till he do this, all the signs and marks in the world are mere darkness, mere riddles, a soul can never understand them.

It will be a needful business, I suppose, to clear up this truth, and herein to show you, that the Spirit of the Lord is mainly sent into the world by Christ, for this very purpose, to speak personally and particularly to the hearts of men, to satisfy them of their interest in Christ; he in the scripture, holds out nothing more than this, that we must come at last to himself, to resolve this case, and

explain this riddle for us, before we can be satisfied in it. That this may be the more evident to you, beloved, it may be cleared from the very attribute or title which our Saviour gives unto the Spirit, {Jn.14:26; 16:7-14,} as the title or attribute given to the Spirit, in all these places, is the Comforter. "But the Comforter, whom the Father will send in my name." "When he, the Comforter is come;" and again, "except I go away, the Comforter will not come to you; but, if I go away, I will send the Comforter, even the Spirit of truth." I say, the attribute and title of being a Comforter in any eminency, imports that satisfaction concerning interest in Christ, is his work. Do but consider the nature of solid comfort, and it will be clear to you.

Suppose a man have a trial in law, or an action to be debated, his heart is full of fears, especially if the title be not clear to himself; when a witness comes in, and speaks point blank to his case, that the judge himself is satisfied, and upon that, gives the sentence in behalf of the person; the testimony of this witness being accepted, gives comfort to his spirit. The truth is, beloved, the Holy Ghost is the Comforter in this regard, as he clears up the case, and makes it unquestionable to thy spirit, and mine, that our sins are forgiven. What is the occasion of all the trouble of spirit in tender hearts? "God hath forsaken me," saith one; "my sins are gone over my head," saith another; "I shall one day be called to account, and answer for them," saith a third. What will now cheer up the heart of such? Let it be satisfied of this, that God will not lay its sins to its charge, and that God will not forsake it; then it is comforted by such a resolution; and say what you will, except you can clear up this thing, that God will never impute iniquity to him, nor bring him to an account for it, you cannot comfort him. Now, the Spirit of God, being the Comforter, must needs have this property to satisfy the spirits of men of such things wherein their comforts consist. If they consist in assurance of pardon of sin, then he cannot be the Comforter, except he satisfy herein; and you shall see that comfort lieth mainly in this, by Christ's own testimony, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." {Mt.9:2} Good cheer depends upon this testimony of the forgiveness of sins, the Spirit of God cannot make a tender heart be of good cheer, till he testifies thoroughly, and clears up this truth that "thy sins are forgiven thee."

Besides this bare title of Comforter, the Spirit hath this particular office given him, as that for which he comes. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." {Jn.14:26} Here it is expressed how the Spirit comforts, by teaching all things, and by leading into all truth, as you have it in Jn.16:13,14, "howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you;" for here our Saviour tells us what those things are, that the Spirit teaches, and by which he comforts; you shall see that forgiveness of sins is the comfort of the Spirit; for "he shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and show it unto you;" mark the words well, beloved, "he shall show it unto you;" by this you may perceive wherein the comforting faculty of the Spirit lieth, namely, in receiving Christ, and in showing those things it receives of him to men. Now, what is it for the Spirit to show to believers those things he receives of Christ; and what are those it shows? The things of Christ, you know, are those the apostle speaks of, Acts 13:38,39, where he mentions his glorious excellencies in few words, "be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man {Christ} is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Now, these being the things of Christ that he intended to send abroad into the world among his own people, these are the things the Spirit receives of him, and is to show. And what is it you will say, to show a thing? It is no more but this, whereas a thing hidden, it is now drawn, held forth, and made manifest; this is to show a thing. All which intimates thus much, that the proper work of the Spirit is to make clear and manifest to the view of men those things of Christ, especially forgiveness of sin, and justification from all things, that they are theirs to whom they were hid before; therefore, in Jn.16:7,8, you find how our Saviour speaks concerning himself, "it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you; and when he is come, he will reprove

the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." Among other particulars, remember this, "he shall convince the world of righteousness;" the meaning is, he shall make known my things, especially this, my righteousness, so manifestly that he shall convince those to whom he speaks of it. But what is it for persons to be convinced? A man is convinced, when things are made so clear to him, that he hath nothing to object against them; as long as he continues objecting he is not convinced; but when things are made so plain and clear, that a man objects no more, then there is conviction. All comes to this, that the Spirit of the Lord is said to convince of the righteousness of Christ, that is, to make it so clear, that any objections made shall have no place at all; that an objector shall have no more to say against it in respect of his own particular.

And whereas, it may be conceived that the Spirit of the Lord comes to comfort only in general; know, beloved, that there is this difference between the ministration of Christ, and the Spirit of Christ; Christ came into the world to merit salvation, eternal life, and forgiveness of sins, and to comfort men in general; for, though he merited comfort in particular, to be applied by the Spirit, yet still, in his ministration, he runs upon general terms for the most part; but the Spirit of the Lord is sent in his room, to come to every man's spirit particularly by himself, and speak that within a man's own self, that Christ by this ministry of the gospel speaks in general to men; and that is the reason that Christ saith, "it is expedient that I go away, because if I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you." As if he had said, he himself doth not come so particularly home to men's spirits; I speak in regard of the general course of Christ, in his ordinary way of ministration; not but that in extraordinary cases he did come home in particular to men's spirits; but the ministration Christ was to exercise was general, and spake more in general than the Spirit did, and therefore he appropriates comfort to the Spirit, rather than to himself; "if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you;" that is, while I am here, the Comforter is not with you, and therefore I go that he may come. This clears up the truth, that the Spirit of the Lord is sent of purpose for this very business, to resolve the spirits of men, whether they have interest in Christ or not.

But now, lest these should seem to be too general, let us descend to particulars; and therein you shall see, that the evidencing particularly to a man's spirit, his interest in Christ, is the proper work of the Spirit of God. For this purpose, look into Rom.8:14-17, "for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God; for ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father; the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Give me leave, I pray you, to open something out of this text; for here you have two spirits that are set in opposition; the spirit of fear and bondage and the spirit of adoption. The spirit of bondage is nothing else but a spirit that speaks from such principles as always lead unto it; the true meaning is, so long as men have no other spirit speaking in them, but from the principle of their own righteousness, they have none but such as leads to bondage; "but we have received the spirit of adoption; whereby we cry Abba, Father;" as if he had said, the Spirit of God speaking to men, is such a Spirit that speaks, in such as have him, this gracious language, "Abba, Father," that is, that by which we are able to say of ourselves that God is our Father, is the spirit of adoption; nothing but that is able to make a man cry, "Abba, Father." What is that? The true meaning is, when a person is so resolved, as that he sits down satisfied that God is now his Father, then he is able to cry, "Abba Father." It is not saying Father, in a general notion, that is meant, but Father in respect of a personal appropriation, my Father. Now, when any comes to this, to be able to call God his own Father, then is the case resolved, and he cannot say, God is his Father, till he can say, he is his child. This is by the apostle again expressly appropriated to the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of adoption.

And that this may be made more clear, the next words are more full, "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God." Now if the question be asked, how shall I know whether I be a child of God, or no; the answer is, "the Spirit testifies with our spirits, that we are the children of God;" and that testimony resolves the case; and whereas the apostle saith, "the Spirit itself beareth witness;" his meaning is, that it is the immediate voice of the Spirit, without any instrument; as when we say of a man, he did a thing himself, it implies, he did not do it by another, or

by deputies, but in his own person, and by himself immediately; so the Spirit himself, in his own person comes, and gives this testimony to a man, that he is the child of God.

Look into I Cor.2:9-13, and the case will be even more clear, that there is no satisfaction concerning things freely given of God, but only by the voice of his Spirit; in the beginning of the chapter, the apostle clears himself, that he meant not to deal with them "in the enticing words of men's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit, and with power." The word 'demonstration' hath a great deal of force among logicians; it is the strongest proof to evince anything that is in question, that can be; it is that kind of proof which carries such light with it, that it cannot be refuted; it is as much as to say, I came not in my own strength, but I came with the Spirit of God, that brings demonstration with him, and that so clear, that there is no gainsaying it; and that this is the meaning here, observe the words in vs. 9, and so on, and you shall see it clearly; for there the apostle saith that, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but {saith he} God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit;" as if he should say, there are things prepared by the Lord for his own people, that are so deep and hidden, that eye can never see, ear can never hear, the heart of man can never understand; that is, there is no way to find them out, but only that he hath revealed them to us by his Spirit; so that it is plain and clear, that nothing besides can make known those things which the Spirit himself makes known; and he gives the reason, "for {saith he} the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." Though there be no diving into the secrets of God, yet "the Spirit of God searcheth all things, even the deep things of God;" and he proves this by an argument thus, "for what man {saith he} knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him; even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." Observe the comparison well; when a man hath some secret thought within himself, and only within his own breast, it may be, of good to such and such a man; while these thoughts are within his breast, who can dive into them, while yet he conceals them within himself? No man but he that thus conceals them; and this is that which the apostle drives at. Even so is it with the secrets of God; the Lord, in his own counsels, hath set down particularly by name, this and that man and woman; these are mine elect vessels; they shall be saved by Christ, and partake of privileges here and hereafter; this I say, the Lord hath not himself communicated in one word from the scripture, I mean, expressed such a man in particular, as, he hath not said, thou Thomas, thou art the man I mean, these things concern thee; things concerning particular persons, are concealed and hid in the breast of the Lord; but, although it be hid there, in respect of any particular vessel that shall be made partaker thereof; though it be concealed, in respect of any visible demonstration; though neither eye hath seen, nor ear hath heard, nor heart hath understood this peculiar dignity; yet the Lord reveals this by his Spirit. Now that the Spirit is able to do it, is clear; for as the Spirit of God knows the things of God; and as he only knows them himself, so he knows those that are freely given us of him; so that if ever you be satisfied in your own spirits, concerning that which is not personally and particularly mentioned in the word of God, as thy name, and my name, which are not recorded there, then we must have it done by the Spirit of God, that only knows the mind of God; for none knows the secret of God, but he that is in God's breast; none can reveal these, but he alone that lieth in his bosom, the Spirit of God; therefore, II Cor.1:22, the apostle tells us, that God hath "sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

You may find the like expression, Eph.1:13,14, where the apostle saith, "in whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." The Spirit is said to be a seal and an earnest given before-hand; but what is it for a person to be sealed, or to receive an earnest? To be sealed, is no more but that whereas the Lord, in his own secret council from eternity, singled out in his own thoughts, such a particular person, and said, he shall be saved; afterwards he comes and sets a mark, as it were, upon him, that so he may be known; as when a man goeth to buy sheep, {bear with the comparison,} he looks upon twenty in a flock, it may be, and he thinks within himself they shall be his; after he hath thus chosen them, by and by he comes and sets his special

mark upon every one of them, that they may be known to be his. So the Lord deals with his people; first, in his thoughts he calls out such a number, and afterwards he comes and sets an evident mark upon them, and seals them; and this sealing is everywhere appropriated to the Spirit of God. {Eph.4:30}

By all these testimonies, I hope you may be abundantly satisfied, that the resolution of this great case, whether or not I have interest in Christ, must be the particular voice of the Spirit of the Lord to the hearts of those, to whom the privileges of Christ do indeed belong; and till there be such a voice, there cannot possibly be a fall resolution of the case.

And yet, for all this universal testimony of Christ and his apostles, how lamentable is it to hear the scorns, out-cries and reproaches of men, against those that dare but say, they know their condition by the Spirit of the Lord; do but tell them, that he informs them of their condition, and speak of his revelation for satisfaction, presently they cry out, these are enthusiasts, have revelations, must be satisfied by the Spirit, before they have satisfaction. I beseech you, take notice, how you blaspheme the Spirit of God, how dare you cast such reproachful terms upon him? Dare you say, he is not given to reveal these things, and for this very purpose? Dare you say, he is not a Spirit of revelation? Is the Spirit of the Lord upon persons out of date now with you? I say, beloved, let men say what they can, till he comes and puts an end to the controversy in the spirit of a man, he shall never be satisfied and resolved.

But some will object; we will not deny but it is the voice of the Spirit that will satisfy the case, but here remains the case yet in question unanswered; suppose I hear such a voice in me, saying, "be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee;" here is the doubt, this is a mystery; O that the Lord would enable you to fathom it! This is the usual way of men; if the word itself did bear witness to this particular voice of the Spirit in me, then could I be satisfied that this were his voice; but if the word do not bear witness to it, speaking in me, I dare not trust it.

Beloved, let me not be mistaken, I answer, having recourse to the word, to give testimony to this particular applying voice of the Spirit in a man, that he may be resolved it is his; I say, that it is true, the Spirit of the Lord never speaks to any believer, but he always speaks according to the word of grace revealed; and if his voice and the word be in the soul, {as they go always together in the faithful,} they will agree, as face answers face in a glass; but yet beware, that you make not the credit of the voice of the Spirit, to depend upon the word; as now I ask of any man, which is of the greatest credit, the testimony of the Spirit, or the word barely considered? If you say, the word written is of greater credit than the testimony of the Spirit, then the Spirit wants something in itself of credit; for this is a certain rule; he that is trusted for a surety's sake, he, for whose sake he is trusted, is of greater credit than the other trusted for his sake; so if the word be the surety for which we will credit the testimony of the Spirit, then it is of greater credit than the Spirit itself. But now, let me tell you, it is not the word that makes us believe the Spirit, but it the Spirit that makes us give credit to the word; we do not receive the Spirit because the word testifies of him, but we receive that, because by the Spirit we are enabled thereto. What our Saviour saith of himself, is as true of the Spirit of the Lord, resolving the question or a man's interest in Christ; "if I bear witness of myself, my testimony is true;" so I say, if the Spirit of the Lord testify of himself, that it is he indeed, it is true; for the Spirit himself bears true witness of himself, that he is the Spirit of truth, and not the spirit of delusion.

Suppose that a father meets his child in the dark, the child is afraid, and fears it is not his father; now, is not the father able to satisfy the child of himself that he is indeed the father, except he bring some other man to resolve it that he is? Is a man able to bear witness of himself to resolve a particular question, and will you take away this privilege from the Spirit of the Lord, to satisfy of himself that he is the Spirit of truth, and not the spirit of delusion?

In brief therefore, as it is the testimony of the Spirit, speaking indeed according to the word, that must satisfy us that we are the children of God; so the same must assure us, that he is the true Spirit of God, and not the spirit of delusion; but still I say, he speaking to men, concerning their interest in Christ, always speaks according to the word of grace; and it is most certainly true, that every voice in man speaking peace, contrary to that, is not the voice of the Spirit of the Lord; yet it is

only the Spirit of God, that can truly satisfy the spirit of a man, that it is his own testimony, and not the spirit of delusion.

You may understand the word in a double sense, either for the word of the law, or of grace in the gospel. Now mark, when we say, it is the Spirit of God bearing witness with our spirits, according to the word, that we are the sons of God; it is not the word of the law that agrees in this with the voice of the Spirit; that speaks nothing but curses; therefore, if you will regard what the law saith, and compare the voice of the Spirit speaking with it, there will be no agreement. The word, according to which the Spirit of the Lord speaks, when he speaks to his people, is the word of grace, and that is no more but this; that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;" {II Cor.5:19;} this is the word of grace, according to which it speaks, reconciling the world to himself; even the world, when men are no otherwise but merely men of the world.

Now, if anything suggest, contrary to this word of grace, it is the voice of the spirit of delusion, and not the Spirit of God.

But how shall I know that this voice, though it be according to the word of grace, is indeed the voice of the Spirit of the Lord?

For answer to this, I must tell you, that as in all arts and sciences, there are some principles that are as ground works, beyond which, there must be no enquiry; so also in divine things, in answering cases of conscience, there must be some principle that must be as the last determining principle, beyond which there must be no further enquiry, nor questioning; as, when a man heareth of something that is to him probable, to clear it up, he would have something to come in that should make that certain, and so satisfy him concerning it. Now that which is the last principle and ground of things, as something there must be, when that comes, a man must be satisfied with that, and question no further concerning the thing, or else he shall never be resolved. So I say to the case in hand, if I would be resolved concerning my interest in Christ, I must take for granted some principle or other, beyond which I must not question, or else there will be question upon question; and so a running in infinitum, and never a conclusion of the case in question. For example, there is the voice of the word of grace that "we are justified freely by his grace;" and this in the spirit of a man, telling him, according to the word that his sins are forgiven him; but how shall I know, saith he, that this is the voice of the Spirit of God? For answer, let me ask but this question; is there anything of better credit, or rather to be believed, than the Spirit himself? Nay, can any believe but by him? If not, then nothing else is able satisfyingly to bear witness to the soul, but itself; this is as if we should receive the testimony of the Spirit upon the credit of some other thing.

I beseech you, beloved, understand me aright; for here is the voice of the Spirit, speaking in man, according to the revelation of grace in the word, saying, thou art the person that dost partake of this grace; this, I say, is the voice of the Spirit of the Lord, establishing a soul, and it may be satisfied in it; especially when the Spirit of the Lord gives power to it to receive it, speaking in it.

It is true indeed, John saith in I John 4:1, that there must be "a trying of spirits, because all are not of God;" but, if you mark it well, he speaks of the trial of ministers, whether they preach true doctrine or not, and refers not to the trial of the Spirit, testifying according to the word, particularly to a man's self; and for anything to give credit unto, or to be a rule of trial to the Spirit of the Lord; and the voice of it being, as I said, always according to the word, the Lord never appointed anything for that end; for he never intended that anything should be of such credit, as to give credit to his Spirit; but the Spirit himself hath sufficient power of himself, by his own efficacy, to clear his own testimony to the heart of the believer.

Thus I have endeavored both to show that the Spirit of the Lord is he that must satisfy a believer; and also how he alone is able to do it, that nothing else can; that this testimony and voice, being according to the word, is his own, and not a false spirit.

But there is one thing more, very considerable, for the further resolution of the case in hand, that the Spirit of the Lord both speaks, and likewise gives to men, to credit and receive what he speaks.

As for instance, suppose the most honorable man in the world should come, and tell a person, such a friend of yours is dead, and hath left all his estate to you, and that you are the heir; this man may speak the truth and nothing but that, and yet the person may not be satisfied of the truth of it, except he be of such credit with him, that he takes it for truth which he speaks. From hence it comes to pass, that besides the voice of the Spirit of the Lord, there must be a voice in the spirit of a man to be as an echo, and that is faith; and, therefore, at first, I told you, there were two main evidences; now, when these concur, then is a man resolved. When the Lord hath spoken to the heart of a man, by his Spirit, according to the word, and his faith receives this testimony, then he sits down by it, and seeks no other satisfaction.

But, for this assurance of faith, {seeing there are many things to be spoken of it,} I shall take another opportunity hereafter to handle it.