

## CHAPTER 2

### INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 2

The apostle, in this chapter, pursues the same argument as before, that the Gospel needed not the wisdom and art of men: this he illustrates by his own example; and then he extols the Gospel above all the wisdom of men; and observes how it comes to be made known to men, even by the Spirit of God: hence it follows, that it is to be taught in his words, and not in the words of men; and that it can be only known and judged of by the spiritual, and not by the natural man. He instances in himself, and in his own ministry, when at Corinth, where he preached the Gospel in a plain and simple manner, without using the ornaments of speech, and human wisdom, (~~411~~1 Corinthians 2:1) his reason was, because he had determined with himself to preach not himself, but a crucified Christ, (~~411~~1 Corinthians 2:2). His manner of behaviour is more largely declared, (~~411~~1 Corinthians 2:3) that he was so far from being elated with his human literature, and priding himself with that, and making use of it in an ostentatious way, that he was attended with much weakness, fear, and trembling; and his discourses were not adorned with the flowers of rhetoric, but were delivered with the power, evidence, and demonstration of the Spirit, (~~411~~1 Corinthians 2:4). And his end and view in this method of preaching were, that the faith of his hearers should not be ascribed to human wisdom, but to a divine power, (~~411~~1 Corinthians 2:5) but lest the Gospel should be thought meanly and contemptibly of, because of the plain dress in which it appeared, the apostle affirms it to be the highest wisdom, as those who had the most perfect knowledge of it could attest; a wisdom superior to the wisdom of this world, or of its princes, since that comes to nothing, (~~411~~1 Corinthians 2:6) the excellency of which he expresses by various epithets, as the wisdom of God, mysterious wisdom, hidden wisdom, ancient wisdom, ordained before the world began, for the glory of the saints, (~~411~~1 Corinthians 2:7) a wisdom unknown to the princes of the world, who otherwise would not have been concerned in the crucifixion of Christ, (~~411~~1 Corinthians 2:8) and that this far exceeds the capacity of men, and could never have been found out by them, he proves, (~~411~~1 Corinthians 2:9) by a testimony out of (~~2604~~Isaiah 64:4) and then proceeds to show how

it comes to be known by any of the sons of men, that it is by the revelation of the Spirit of God, (~~4120~~1 Corinthians 2:10) which is illustrated by the nature of the spirit of man within him, which only knows the things of a man; so in like manner only the Spirit of God knows the things of God, and can make them known to others, (~~4121~~1 Corinthians 2:11). And in this way he observes, that he and others became acquainted with these things; namely, by receiving not the spirit of the world, which at most could only have taught them the wisdom of the world, but the Spirit of God, whereby they knew their interest in the blessings of free grace, published in the Gospel, (~~4122~~1 Corinthians 2:12). And seeing the Gospel is made known by the Spirit of God, it should be delivered, not in the words of man's wisdom, but in the words of the Holy Spirit, as the apostle affirms he and other ministers did deliver it, returning to his former argument, (~~4123~~1 Corinthians 2:13). And also it follows from hence, that the things of the Gospel, which the Spirit reveals, cannot be known and received by the natural man, who has no discerning of them, and so no value for them, (~~4124~~1 Corinthians 2:14) and can only be discerned, judged, and approved of by spiritual men, (~~4125~~1 Corinthians 2:15) and who are not to be judged by natural and carnal men, because they have not the mind of Christ, and so cannot instruct them; but spiritual men have it, such as the apostle and others, (~~4126~~1 Corinthians 2:16).

**Ver. 1.** *And I, brethren, when I came to you*, etc.] This account the apostle gives of himself is occasioned, either by what he had said in the latter part of the preceding chapter, concerning the choice God has made of the foolish, weak, base, and despicable things of the world, and of his calling them by his grace both to fellowship with the saints in common, and therefore he accommodated his ministry unto them, and in particular to the ministry of the word, of which he himself was a like instance and an example; or else by what he had declared in (~~4117~~1 Corinthians 1:17) of the same chapter, that he was sent to preach the Gospel,

*not with wisdom of words*; which he here reassumes, and affirms agreeably, that when he first came to Corinth, he

*came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom*; for though he was not only versed in Jewish learning, being brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; but had also a good share of Grecian literature, and was capable, upon proper occasions, to cite the Greek poets, as he does Aratus, (~~4472~~Acts 17:28) and Menander, (~~5012~~Titus 1:12,13) and so could, had he thought fit,

have adorned his discourses with pompous language, with the flowers of rhetoric, and the eloquence of the Grecians; yet he chose not such a high and florid style, and which savoured so much of human wisdom and art; for the subject he treated of required no such dress, nor any great swelling words of vanity, or a bombast style to set it off, and gain the applause and assent of men: for what he delivered were plain matters of fact, attested by God himself,

*declaring unto you the testimony of God*; that is, the Gospel, which bears a testimony to the love, grace, and mercy of God, his kindness and good will to the sons of men, in giving and sending his only begotten Son to be the Saviour and Redeemer of them; and in which God bears a testimony of his Son, of his sonship, deity, mediation, incarnation, obedience, sufferings, and death, of his resurrection, ascension to heaven, session at his right hand, intercession for his people, and his second coming to judgment, and of eternal life and salvation by him. All which being matter of fact, and depending upon the witness of God, which is greater than that of men, needed no art nor oratory of men to recommend it: it was enough in plain words, and easy language, to declare it, with the evidence by which it was supported. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, read, “the mystery” of God: and so the Syriac version *ahl ad azr*, “the mystery of God” one of Stephens’s copies reads, “the mystery of Christ”; and the Vulgate Latin version, “the testimony of Christ”.

**Ver. 2.** *For I determined not to know anything among you*, etc.] This was a resolution the apostle entered into before he came among them, that though he was well versed in human literature, and had a large compass of knowledge in the things of nature, yet would make known nothing else unto them, or make anything else the subject of his ministry,

*save Christ, and him crucified*: he had a spiritual and experimental knowledge of Christ himself, and which he valued above all things else; and this qualified him to make him known to others; and which knowledge he was very willing and ready to communicate by preaching the Gospel, which is the means of making known Christ as God’s salvation to the souls of men; and on this subject he chiefly insisted, and in which he took great delight and pleasure; he made known the things respecting the person of Christ, as that he was God, the Son of God, and truly man. God and man in one person; the things respecting his office, as that he was the Messiah, the mediator, prophet, priest, and King, the head, husband, Saviour, and

Redeemer of his church and people; and the things respecting his work as such, and the blessings of grace procured by him; as that justification is by his righteousness, pardon by his blood, peace, reconciliation, and atonement by his sacrifice, and salvation alone and entirely by him. His determination was to preach none but Christ; not himself, nor man; nor the power and purity of human nature, the free will and works of the creature, but to exclude all and everything from being partners with Christ in the business of salvation. This was the doctrine he chose in the first place, and principally, to insist upon, even salvation by Christ, and him, as

*crucified*: that which was the greatest offence to others was the most delightful to him, because salvation comes through and by the cross of Christ; and he dwelt upon this, and determined to do so; it being most for the glory of Christ, and what was owned for the conversion of sinners, the comfort of distressed minds, and is suitable food for faith, as he knew by his own experience.

**Ver. 3.** *And I was with you in weakness*, etc.] Meaning either the weakness of his bodily presence, the contemptibleness of his voice, and the mean figure he made as a preacher among them, both with respect to the matter and manner of his ministry in the eyes of many; or his lowly and humble deportment among them, not exerting the power and authority Christ had given him as an apostle; but choosing rather to work with his own hands, as he did at Corinth, to minister to his own necessities, and those of others; or the many persecutions which he endured there for the sake of preaching a crucified Christ; and which he sometimes calls “infirmities”; (see ~~4713~~ 2 Corinthians 12:9,10) wherefore it is added,

*and in fear, and in much trembling*: not only on account of the greatness and awfulness of the work in which he was engaged, and lest the souls he ministered unto should be drawn aside from the truth, and into a sinful compliance; but because of the violence of men against him, threatening his life, and lying in wait for it: hence, the Lord, to encourage him, spake in a vision to him, and bid him not be afraid, but boldly preach his Gospel, and not be silent; assuring him of his presence, and that no man should set on him to hurt him, for he had many chosen vessels there to call by his grace through his ministry, (~~4480~~ Acts 18:9,10) which no doubt greatly served to remove the fears and tremor that attended him.

**Ver. 4.** *And my speech, and my preaching*, etc.] As he determined, so he acted. As the subject matter of his ministry was not any of the liberal arts

and sciences, or the philosophy and dry morality of the Gentiles, but salvation by a crucified Christ; so his style, his diction, his language used in preaching,

*was not with enticing words of man's wisdom*; with technical words, words of art, contrived by human wisdom to captivate the affections; and with bare probable arguments only, a show of reason to persuade the mind to an assent, when nothing solid and substantial is advanced, only a run of words artfully put together, without any strength of argument in them; a method used by the false teachers, and which the apostle here strikes at, and tacitly condemns:

*but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power*; partly by making use of solid proofs out of the writings of the Old Testament, indited by the Spirit of God, and which amounted to a demonstration of the truths he delivered; and partly by signs, and wonders, and miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, those extraordinary instances of divine power, which greatly confirmed the doctrines he preached: and besides all these, the Spirit of God wonderfully assisted him in his work, both as to words and matter; directing him, what to say, and in what form, in words, not which human wisdom taught, but which the Holy Ghost taught; and accompanying his ministry with his power, to the conversion, comfort, edification, and salvation of many.

**Ver. 5.** *That your faith should not stand*, etc.] “Or be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God”. The Spirit of God directed him, and he under his influence chose, and by his assistance pursued this way of preaching, with this view, and for this reason, that faith in Christ, and in the doctrines of his Gospel, which comes by hearing, might not be attributed to the force of human eloquence and oratory; or stand upon so sandy a foundation, as that which might, if that was the case, be puffed away by a superior flow and force of words; but that it might be ascribed, as it ought to be, to almighty power, stand in it, be supported by it, and at last be finished and fulfilled with it.

**Ver. 6.** *Howbeit we speak wisdom*, etc.] Though the wise philosophers among the Gentiles accounted the Gospel foolishness; and though the apostle, by an ironical concession, had called the ministry of it the foolishness of preaching, and the foolishness of God, and had thought best, for wise reasons, to deliver it in a plain and simple manner, without the embellishments of human wisdom; yet he vindicates it from the charge of

folly: it was not folly, but wisdom, which he and his fellow ministers preached, and that of the highest kind, as appears from what follows. Though it was not esteemed so by all men, yet

*among*, or with

*them that are perfect*; adult, at age, opposed to babes and children; such who have their understandings enlightened by the spirit of wisdom and revelation; who have their senses exercised to discern between divine and human wisdom; and who are perfect in a comparative sense, having more spiritual knowledge and understanding than others; for none, in the present state of things, are absolutely perfect in knowledge; they that know most, know but in part: now to such the Gospel and the doctrines of it appear to be the highest wisdom; for the apostle's sense is not that he and other Gospel ministers preached the more sublime doctrines of it to a select set of persons that had more judgment and a better understanding of things than others: if this could be thought to be the apostle's meaning, he might be supposed to allude to a custom among the Jews, not to deliver the sublime things of the law, but to persons so and so qualified.

“Says R. Ame<sup>f17</sup>, they do not deliver the secrets of the law, but to him who has the five things or characters in (<sup>2388B</sup>Isaiah 3:3)”

So they did not suffer the first chapter of Genesis and the visions of Ezekiel to be read until thirty years of age<sup>f18</sup>; and from them the Pythagoreans took their notion of not declaring their mysteries but to *τελειοι*, “perfect ones”, the word here used<sup>f19</sup>; but the apostle's sense is, that to such that were perfect, and even to everyone that had the least degree of spiritual knowledge, the Gospel was wisdom. Some refer this clause not to persons, but things; and so the Arabic version reads it, “we speak wisdom concerning things that are perfect”; as the things of the Gospel are, such as a plenteous redemption, perfect righteousness, full pardon, plenary satisfaction, and complete salvation and happiness:

*yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought*: meaning not the idolatry, superstition, curious and magic arts introduced by demons, which principalities and powers, with all their works, are spoiled and destroyed by Christ; but either the political wisdom and crafty schemes of the civil governors of the world, against Christ and his Gospel, who were by this time most, if not all of them, dead; or the vain philosophy of the wise and learned among the Gentiles, who every day

were less and less in vogue, through the quick and powerful spread of the Gospel; or rather the highest pitch of wisdom and knowledge in divine things, which the doctors and Rabbins among the Jews attained to in the age before the Messiah's coming; called "this world" in distinction from the times of the Messiah, which in Jewish language was, "the world to come", as Dr. Lightfoot observes; who with all their wisdom were confounded and brought to nought by the superior wisdom of the Gospel.

**Ver. 7.** *But we speak the wisdom of God*, etc.] Not of men, not of the wise politicians, the learned philosophers and Rabbins; that which human wisdom has no hand in forming, nor in revealing, nor in propagating, and which is disliked and disapproved of by it: the Gospel is the sole produce of divine wisdom, and in which there is a glorious display of it; even in those doctrines which are the most charged with folly, as salvation by a crucified Christ, justification by his righteousness, pardon by his blood, satisfaction by his sacrifice, etc.

*in a mystery*; it is mysterious wisdom. The Gospel is full of mysteries; there is the mystery of God, of a trinity of persons in the divine essence; the mystery of Christ, of his person, as God manifest in the flesh, of his divine sonship, and incarnation in the womb of a virgin; the mystery of the Spirit's grace in regeneration, of the saints' union to Christ, and communion with him, the resurrection of the same body, the change of living saints at Christ's coming, with many others:

*even the hidden wisdom*; the Gospel lay hid in God, in the thoughts of his heart, in the deep things of his mind, the counsels of his will, and purposes of his grace; it was hid in Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; it was hid under the types and shadows of the ceremonial law; and is hid in the Scriptures, which must be diligently searched for it, as for hidden treasures. It was hid from angels, and from Adam, until revealed; it was in some measure hid from the Jews under the former dispensation, to whom it was made known; and in some sense from believers, under the present dispensation, who as yet know it but in part; and is entirely hid from natural men, even from the most wise and prudent among them. This epithet expresses the preciousness, secrecy, and also security of the Gospel; hidden things being commonly of value, and being kept secret, are also safe; hidden and secret wisdom has been always esteemed, both by Greeks and Jews: hence that saying <sup>f20</sup> of the latter,

“he that would be rich in learning of the law, **ayhç hmkj hy** “and that wisdom which is hidden”, in a hidden and secret place, should hide and secrete himself from the children of men.”

The apostle adds,

*which God ordained before the world.* The Egyptians and Grecians boasted much of the “earliness” of their wisdom, but neither of them are to be mentioned with the Gospel for the antiquity of it; it is the birth of God’s counsels of old, the produce of his purposes, which he purposed in Christ before the world was; a scheme of things he drew in his eternal mind; it is a transcript of the council of peace and covenant of grace, which were from everlasting; what the Jews <sup>f21</sup> say of the law, is much more true of the Gospel,

“that it was treasured up with God (they say two thousand years, and sometimes nine hundred and seventy four ages), before the world was created;”

and often speak of it as one of the seven things created before the world was <sup>f22</sup>. Moreover, this was to our glory; under the present dispensation, which by reason of the Gospel has a glory in it surpassing the former; it is to the glory both of the ministers of it, whose honour it is to be employed in preaching it, and in being by it the instruments of converting such who will be their glory another day, and to the glory of all believers who are by it called to the obtaining of the glory of Christ Jesus.

**Ver. 8.** *Which none of the princes of this world knew*, etc.] Meaning not the devils, as some have thought, who had they known what God designed to do by the death of Christ, would never have been concerned in bringing it about; nor so much the political governors of the Roman empire, particularly in Judea, as Herod and Pontius Pilate, who also were entirely ignorant of it; but rather the ecclesiastical rulers of the Jewish church state, called **hzh µl w[**, “this world”, in distinction from **abh µl w[**, “the world to come”, or times of the Messiah; (see ~~<SIB>~~ Hebrews 2:5) such as the priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, the Rabbins and learned doctors. These knew nothing of the wisdom of the Gospel, or the wise counsels of God concerning salvation by Christ; they knew not the Messiah when he came, nor the prophecies concerning him; the Jews and their rulers did what they did through ignorance, and fulfilled those things they knew nothing of; (see ~~<4B7>~~ Acts 3:17,18 13:27).



*for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

They would have received him, believed in him, and not put him to death: a very great character is here given of Christ, “the Lord of glory”, or the glorious Jehovah; reference seems to be had to (~~2307~~ Psalm 24:7) where he is called, “the King of glory”, and is an argument of his true and proper deity: he is so called because possessed of all glorious perfections, and is the brightness of his Father’s glory; the same honour and glory are due to him as to the Father; and the same ascriptions of glory are made to him by angels and men. This is an instance of what the ancients call a communication of idioms or properties, whereby that which belongs to one nature in Christ, is predicated of his person, as denominated from the other: thus here the crucifixion of him, which properly belongs to his human nature, and that to his body only, is spoken of his person, and that as denominated from his divine nature, “the Lord of glory”; and he being so, this rendered his crucifixion, sufferings, and death, in human nature, efficacious to answer all the purposes for which they were endured.

**Ver. 9.** *But as it is written*, etc.] Not in an apocryphal book, called the Apocalypse of Elijah the prophet, as some have thought, but in (~~2304~~ Isaiah 64:4) with some variation; and is brought to prove that the Gospel is mysterious and hidden wisdom, unknown to the princes of this world, and ordained before the world was, for the glory of the saints: for the following words are not to be understood of the glories and happiness of the future state; though they are indeed invisible, unheard of, and inconceivable as to the excellency and fulness of them, and are what God has prepared from all eternity, for all those on whom he bestows his grace here; but of the doctrines of grace, and mysteries of the Gospel, as the context and the reason of their citation abundantly show; and are what

*eye hath not seen, nor ear heard*: which could never have been seen to be read by the eye of man, nor the sound thereof ever heard by the ear of man, had not God been pleased to make a revelation of them; and though they are to be seen and read in the sacred writings, and to be heard either read or expounded, with the outward hearing of the ear; yet are neither to be seen nor heard intellectually, spiritually, and savingly, unless, God gives eyes to see, and ears to hear; the exterior senses of seeing and hearing are not sufficient to come at and discover the sense of them; flesh and blood, human nature cannot search them out, nor reveal them, no nor the internal senses, the intellectual capacity of men:

*neither have entered into the heart of man*; this clause is not in the original text; but is a phrase often used by the Jews, for that which never came into a man's mind, was never thought of by him, or he ever had any conceptions, or the least notion and idea of; so the elders of the city, at the beheading of the heifer, are represented not only as saying, "our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it"; but also neither *wnybl l [ htl [*, "hath it entered into our hearts", that the sanhedrim hath shed blood <sup>f23</sup>; and elsewhere <sup>f24</sup> it is said, this matter is like to a king, *wbl b hl [ç*, "into whose heart it entered", to plant in his garden, etc.

*The things which God hath prepared for them that love him*; in the original text it is, "for him that waiteth for him"; the sense is the same, for such as hope in the Lord and wait for him, are lovers of him; and the meaning is, that God has prepared and laid up in his own breast, in his counsels and covenant, in the types, shadows, and sacrifices of the old law, in the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament, such doctrines and mysteries of grace as were not so seen, heard, known, and understood by the Old Testament prophets and saints; and has reserved for his people under the Gospel dispensation, the times of the Messiah, a more clear discovery of them: so the Jews themselves own that these words belong to the world to come <sup>f25</sup>, which with them commonly signifies the days of the Messiah; though here they think fit to distinguish them, and interpret the phrase, "eye hath not seen", of the eye of the prophets: their words are these <sup>f26</sup>;

"all prophesied not, but of the days of the Messiah; but as to the world to come, eye hath not seen, O God, besides thee."

The gloss on it is,

"the eye of the prophets hath not been able to see it."

Indeed, the mysteries of the Gospel are more clearly discerned now, than by the prophets formerly.

**Ver. 10.** *But God hath revealed them unto us*, etc.] Should it be said, that since this wisdom is so hidden and mysterious, the doctrines of the Gospel are so unknown, so much out of the sight and understanding of men, how come any to be acquainted with them? The answer is ready, God has made a revelation of them, not only in his word, which is common to men, nor only to his ministers, but to private Christians and believers,

*by his Spirit*; which designs not the external revelation made in the Scriptures, though that also is by the Spirit; but the internal revelation and application of the truths of the Gospel to the souls of men, which is sometimes ascribed to the Father of Christ. (<sup><4167></sup>Matthew 16:17) sometimes to Christ himself, (<sup><4012></sup>Galatians 1:12) and sometimes to the Spirit of Christ, (<sup><4017></sup>Ephesians 1:17) and who guides into all truth, (<sup><4163></sup>John 16:13), and here to the Father by the Spirit:

*for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God*; which does not suppose any ignorance of these things in the Spirit, antecedent to his searching of them; but his complete and perfect knowledge of them; even as God's searching of the hearts of men expresses his omniscience, and through knowledge of all that is in them: the "all things" the Spirit searches into, and has a perfect knowledge of, do not design in the utmost extent everything which comes within the compass of his infinite understanding; but every thing that is in, or belongs to the Gospel of Christ, even the more mysterious and sublime, as well as the more plain and easy doctrines: for the "deep things of God" intend not the perfections of his nature, which are past finding out unto perfection by men; nor the depths of his wise and righteous providence; but the mysterious doctrines of the Gospel, the fellowship of the mystery which was hid in God, his wise counsels of old concerning man's salvation, the scheme of things drawn in his eternal mind, and revealed in the word.

**Ver. 11.** *For what man knoweth the things of a man*, etc.] The thoughts of a man's heart, the conceptions of his mind, the schemes he is drawing there, his designs, purposes, and intentions; these can never be known by another man, no, nor by angels or devils; not by any creature; by none

*save the spirit of a man which is in him?* which is only conscious to, and can only make known the things that are in him:

*even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God*; and which, as it proves how secret, hidden, unknown, the mysteries of grace are, until revealed by the Spirit; so it gives full evidence to the deity of the Holy Ghost, and clearly shows he must be God, who is in him, knows the thoughts of his heart, the counsels of his mind, his purposes and decrees, and what is contained in them.

**Ver. 12.** *Now we have received not the spirit of the world*, etc.] Meaning either Satan, the god of the world, the spirit that is in it, and rules over it;

or the sinful carnal disposition of the men of the world, which is a spirit of covetousness, uncleanness, pride, malice, and error; or rather the carnal wisdom of the world, which is common to worldly men, lies in the knowledge of worldly things, and is pursued and exercised for worldly advantages:

*but the Spirit which is of God*; the Holy Ghost, which proceeds from the Father and the Son, is the gift of God to his people, and whom they receive through the doctrine of faith into their hearts, as a spirit of illumination, faith, comfort, adoption, truth, and as a seal and earnest of future glory:

*that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God*; who has given himself, his Son, and all things freely along with him, as a justifying righteousness, remission of sins, adoption, and eternal life; all which were provided for them in the council and covenant of peace, and made up that grace given unto them freely in Christ before the world began; for there was not only an eternal purpose to bestow these gifts, in the mind of God, and a promise of them in covenant, but a real donation of them to them, as considered in Christ so early: besides, God gave his Son, and Christ gave himself for them before they knew anything of the matter; and therefore must be unknown, until made known by the Spirit of God, who is sent unto them, and into their hearts, for this purpose, to make them known; which he does, by showing all this grace, and by opening and applying the truths of the everlasting Gospel: and this knowledge is not a mere notional one, but spiritual, experimental, and approbational, joined with affection and admiration; and is a knowledge of interest in these things, and which makes both humble and obedient.

**Ver. 13.** *Which things also we speak*, etc.] Namely, the things which have not been seen by the eye, heard by the ear, or understood by the heart of man; the things God has prepared for his people; the deep things of God; the things of God which are only known to the Spirit; the things that are freely given to them of God, and made known to them by the Spirit of God: these things are spoken out, preached, and declared to the sons of men,

*not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth*; which are learned in the schools of the philosophers, put together by human art, and "in the taught words of human wisdom", as the clause may be rendered; such as are taught and acquired by human learning, so artificially formed in their order

and structure as to work upon the affections of men, captivate the mind, and persuade to an assent.

*But which the Holy Ghost teacheth*; or “in the taught” words “of the Holy Ghost”; in the language of the Scriptures, edited by the Spirit of God; or such as the Holy Spirit taught them, suggested to them, directed them to the use of; for he not only supplied them with matter, but furnished them with words, with proper and spiritual oratory:

*comparing spiritual things with spiritual*; the things of the Spirit of God, the doctrines of the Gospel, with the spiritual writings of the Old Testament, whereby their truth and harmony are demonstrated; speaking as the oracles of God, and prophesying or preaching according to the analogy of faith; and adapting spiritual words to spiritual truths, clothing them with a language suitable and convenient to them, not foreign and flourishing, but pure, simple, and native; or accommodating and communicating spiritual things, as to matter and form, to spiritual men; which sense the Arabic version favours and confirms, such being only capable of them; and with these there is no need to use the eloquence, oratory, wisdom, and words of men.

**Ver. 14.** *But the natural man*, etc.] Not a babe in Christ, one that is newly born again, for though such have but little knowledge of spiritual things, yet they have a taste, and do relish and desire, and receive the sincere milk of the word, and grow thereby; but an unregenerate man, that has no knowledge at all of such things; not an unregenerate man only, who is openly and notoriously profane, abandoned to sensual lusts and pleasures; though such a man being sensual, and not having the Spirit, must be a natural man; but rather the wise philosopher, the Scribe, the disputer of this world; the rationalist, the man of the highest attainments in nature, in whom reason is wrought up to its highest pitch; the man of the greatest natural parts and abilities, yet without the Spirit and grace of God, mentioned (<sup>4013</sup>1 Corinthians 1:20) and who all along, both in that chapter and in this, quite down to this passage, is had in view: indeed, every man in a state of nature, who is as he was born, whatever may be the inward furniture of his mind, or his outward conduct of life, is but a natural man, and such an one

*receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God*: not the things relating to the deity, personality, and perfections of the Holy Spirit, though these the natural man knows not, nor receives; nor the things done by him,

particularly the operations of his grace on the souls of men in regeneration, concerning which he says, as Nicodemus did, “how can these things be?” but the truths of the Gospel before spoken of; so called, because they are contained in the Scriptures edited by the Spirit of God, are the deep things of God, which he searches into and reveals; and because they are made known by him, who is given and received for that end and purpose, that the saints might know them; and because they are delivered by the preachers of the Gospel, in words which he teacheth; now these the natural man receives not in the love of them, so as to approve of and like them, truly to believe them, cordially embrace them, and heartily be subject to them, profess and obey them, but on the contrary abhors and rejects them:

*for they are foolishness unto him*; they are looked upon by him as absurd, and contrary to reason; they do not agree with his taste, he disrelishes and rejects them as things insipid and distasteful; he regards them as the effects of a crazy brain, and the reveries of a distempered head, and are with him the subject of banter and ridicule:

*neither can he know them*: as a natural man, and whilst he is such, nor by the help and mere light of nature only; his understanding, which is shut unto them, must be opened by a divine power, and a superior spiritual light must be thrown into it; at most he can only know the literal and grammatical sense of them, or only in the theory, notionally and speculatively, not experimentally, spiritually, and savingly:

*because they are spiritually discerned*; in a spiritual manner, by a spiritual light, and under the influence, and by the assistance of the Spirit of God. There must be a natural visive discerning faculty, suited to the object; as there must be a natural visive faculty to see and discern natural things, so there must be a spiritual one, to see, discern, judge, and approve of spiritual things; and which only a spiritual, and not a natural man has.

**Ver. 15.** *But he that is spiritual*, etc.] Meaning not any particular individual person, not the pope of Rome, as his adherents vainly imagine, whom they fancy to be a supreme and infallible judge in things spiritual, from whose judgment is no appeal, and who himself comes not under the judgment of any; for he is so far from being a spiritual man, or having judgment in spiritual things, that he stands described as the man of sin, the son of perdition, the wicked one, the beast, to whom a mouth is given, speaking great things and blasphemies; but a set of men are here meant, and not such who are only outwardly reformed in their lives and

conversations, who are at best but moral, and not spiritual men; nor all that have a form of godliness, an appearance of spirituality; there may be such who may have this, and yet deny the power of it, in which the principle and essence of spirituality lies; nor all such who have spiritual gifts, which may be where there is no spiritual grace; or that have a greater degree of spiritual knowledge than others, or that even have a greater degree of real grace than others; for though these are certainly spiritual men, (~~400~~1 Corinthians 3:1,2 ~~400~~Galatians 6:1) yet they are not the only ones; others that have less knowledge and grace, are spiritual also, and are comprehended in this character; much less does it design such who have no flesh or sin in them, for there are none without sin in the present state; and if this was essential to a spiritual man, there would be no spiritual man in the world; such are only the saints in heaven, who are without fault before the throne: and after the resurrection will have spiritual bodies, as well as their spirits or souls are now made perfect: but here a spiritual man intends every man that is born of the Spirit; seeing what is born of the Spirit, is Spirit, or spiritual; from whence the regenerate man is denominated spiritual, he is such an one that is quickened by the Spirit of God, and lives spiritually by faith on Christ; he breathes after spiritual things, salvation by Christ, and an interest in him, communion with God, conformity to Christ, pardon of sin, a justifying righteousness, and eternal life: he has spiritual senses, and these in exercise; he has a spiritual sight of things, of himself, and his lost state by nature, and of the person, grace, and things of Christ; he has a spiritual hearing of the Gospel, by which faith comes; he hears so as to live, and he lives so as that he hears the joyful sound with understanding, approbation, and acceptance; he has a spiritual taste of things, of the grace of God, the fruit of Christ, and the truths of the Gospel; and he smells a sweet savour in them; he has a spiritual feeling, he feels the weight and burden of sin, the gracious influences and operations of the Spirit, and handles Christ, the word of life: he talks the spiritual language of Canaan, and his speech betrays him to be a spiritual man; and he walks spiritually by faith on Christ, and in the paths of holiness, righteousness, and truth: he is one that is renewed by the Holy Spirit, in the spirit of his mind; has a new heart, and a new spirit put within him; and is become a new creature in Christ: he has the good work of grace wrought in his soul; and in him grace is the reigning principle; in him the Spirit of God himself dwells, and he is led by him out of himself to Christ, and into all truth, and walks after him, and not after the flesh: his conversation is spiritual and heavenly; he is spiritually minded, he minds not the things of

the flesh, but the things of the Spirit; and though there is a great deal of carnality in him, in his thoughts, his words, and actions, yet this is matter of grief to him, and is his daily complaint: and such an one

*judgeth all things*; or “discerneth all things”; not all things in nature, or which fall within the compass of human knowledge; there are many things he may have no knowledge of, nor judgment in, being for the most part not the wise and prudent, but the foolish things of the world who are spiritual; but things divine and spiritual, the things of the Spirit of God, the doctrines of the Gospel before spoken of; and these not every difficult passage of Scripture, or knotty point of controversy, but the several articles of faith, necessary and essential to salvation; these are plain and easy to him, they stand before him in a clear light; as that salvation is alone by Christ, pardon by his blood, justification by his righteousness, etc. these he has seen and tasted of, and relishes, and can discern things that differ, and approve those which are more excellent; he can distinguish truth from error, and the voice of Christ from the voice of a stranger; and knows when the Gospel is preached, and when not, of which he judges by the word of God and his own experience: not that every spiritual man has a like degree of spiritual knowledge and judgment, but everyone discerns and judges according to the measure of the gift of Christ:

*yet he himself is judged of no man*; or “discerned of no man”: that is, not of any natural man; who is not capable of discerning and judging who and what he is; only a spiritual man can discern and judge of his spiritual light, grace, and state; as the churches of Christ do, when persons are proposed to, them for communion; the other knows him not, but takes him to be a weak, or a wicked man, an hypocrite and a deceiver; and it is a small thing with him to be judged of man’s judgment; he cares not what judgment the natural man passes upon him; nor does his faith in things spiritual, stand upon the authority and judgment of men; nor will he submit to it; nor can he be reprov’d, convinc’d, and refuted by such a person: for though a thousand sophistic arguments may be used with him which he cannot answer, he has a witness within himself to the truths of the Gospel, which opposes itself, and stands its ground against all objections; as with respect to the impurity of human nature, the impotency of man to anything that is spiritually good of himself, the insufficiency of his righteousness to justify him before God, the proper deity and real excellency of Christ, his blood and righteousness, and the internal work of the Spirit of God on the heart; sooner may a rock be removed out of its place, than a truly spiritual man



can be convicted by a natural man of the falsehood of these things, of which he has had an inward experience, as well as is instructed in them by the word of God; nor can he be better taught and instructed by the natural man.

**Ver. 16.** *For who hath known the mind of the Lord,* etc.] The deep counsels of his heart, the scheme of salvation by Jesus Christ, as drawn in his eternal mind, the sense of the Spirit of God in the writings of the Old Testament, the things of the Spirit of God, or the doctrines of grace more clearly revealed under the Gospel dispensation; not any natural man, by the light of truth and strength of reason, has known any of these things. The apostle either cites or alludes to (<sup>29013</sup>Isaiah 40:13)

*that he may instruct him?* not the Lord, who needs no instruction from any, nor can any teach and instruct him, nor would any be so bold and insolent as to attempt it nor does the knowledge of the mind of the Lord qualify any for such a work; since if he knows ever so much of it, he cannot know more than the Lord himself: but the spiritual man, whom a natural man, being ignorant of the mind of the Lord, cannot instruct; and so the words give a very proper and sufficient reason why the spiritual man is not discerned, judged, convinced, and instructed by the natural man:

*but we have the mind of Christ;* the same with “the mind of the Lord” which proves that Christ is the Lord, or Jehovah, and so truly and properly God; and which is to be understood, not only of the apostles and ministers of the Gospel, but of all true believers; and therefore want no instruction, as they can have none from the natural man; though chiefly of the former, whereby they were abundantly qualified for the further instruction even of spiritual men.