

neous teachers, and directing to make trial of "spirits;" and in the very closing book of the canon, we see, in the directions addressed to the angel of more than one church, that the constituted ecclesiastical authorities are reckoned with as charged with the responsibility of suffering or prohibiting others to teach.

It were a very unworthy aim, were we to insist on such a subject only for the sake of magnifying spiritual offices. Our desire that the work of evangelists be well done is so much stronger than any jealousy we feel that any part of the work should be done by others, that we would gladly say: Would that all the Lord's people were prophets! if, on any fair reading of the law and testimony in the first place, and any fair consulting with the teaching of history, we could see that good has resulted from the adoption of the principle of lay preaching. But from the spirit in which a standing ministry is often decried, and the very general association of this cry with a mutilated Gospel, or a defective exhibition of the truth, we feel warranted in still insisting on the necessity of a regular course of preparation for those who are to handle the mysteries of the kingdom, or mould the religious opinions of their fellow-men. And if, as it is pleasing to know, sects which are supposed to have discarded learning, are, after all, applying themselves to correct the mistakes of their predecessors, or, as may be the case, to supply what these had less opportunity, though willing, to provide, it is to be hoped that we need not so very laboriously defend a position which few venture very deliberately to assail, as rather turn an eye inward upon ourselves, enquiring whether the power of the pulpit might not be more effectively worked; whether by anything wanting in the matter or manner of our preaching we may not be hindering the gospel, or diluting and impoverishing the spiritual aliment which is designed to nourish and perfect living souls.

Happily, at least those whom I address are unanimous in the opinion that the Gospel, and not the law, is the power of God unto salvation. The time has long passed, surely, among Protestant and Presbyterian Churches, when the law or moral code was substituted for the doctrine of the cross, and when it was thought unsafe to proclaim the doctrines of free grace in the hearing of all men. I do not suppose that these are darkened among us by any admixture even of semi-Pelagian errors, or schemes for adjusting Gospel truth to flattering theories of the sufficiency of the human will. We are agreed, I suppose, in believing that the law, apart from the Gospel, is the ministry of condemnation to fallen man; and that truly for the sake of the law itself, that is, as we would bring men to love the law, would seat it thoroughly in their affections as well as consciences, we must keep before men's minds the great theme of Calvary. It is according to all the philosophy of our nature, that mere expositions of duty, mere denunciations of wrath, will not humble and win the spirit of guilty and depraved man; that the temper to which alone these can form is either the spirit of self-righteous confidence and presumption, or, reversely, of despondency and fear, which again leads on to discontent and reckless living. It is the Gospel which is spirit and life; which, while it crosses no designs of the law, carries with it truths unknown to the law, through the instrumentality of which holy affections are produced, and the life effectually reformed. These are the truths which sanctify, because associated with the mighty power and agency of the Holy Ghost. "Received ye the spirit," demands the apostle, "by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" He plainly insinuates the answer.